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1

Surendranath Banerjea

Sir Surendranath Banerjee (November 10, 1848-August 6, 1925) was one of the earliest Indian political leaders during the British Raj. He founded the Indian National Association, one of the earliest Indian political organizations, and later became a senior leader of the Indian National Congress.

EARLY LIFE

Surendranath Banerjee was born in Calcutta, in the province of Bengal to a kulin Brahmin Hindu family. He was deeply influenced in liberal, progressive thinking by his father Durga Charan Banerjee, a doctor. Banerjee was educated at the Parental Academic Institution and at the Hindu College. After graduating from the University of Calcutta, he traveled to England in 1868, along with Romesh Chunder Dutt and Behari Lal Gupta to sit for the Indian Civil Service examinations. He cleared the exam in 1869, but was barred owing to a dispute over his exact age. After clearing the matter in the courts, Banerjee cleared the exam again in 1871 and was posted as assistant magistrate in Sylhet. However, Banerjee was dismissed soon from his job owing to racial discrimination. Banerjee went to England to protest this decision, but was unsuccessful. During his stay in England (1874-1875) he studied the works of Edmund Burke and other liberal philosophers.

POLITICAL CAREER

Upon his return, Banerjee became an English professor at the Metropolitan Institution, the Free Church Institution and at the Ripon College. He began delivering public speeches on nationalist

and liberal political subjects, as well as Indian history. He founded the newspaper, The Bengali, and founded the Indian National Association, the first Indian political organization of its kind, on July 26, 1876. He used the organization to tackle the issue of age-limit for Indian students appearing for ICS exams. He condemned the racial discrimination perpetrated by British officials in India through speeches all over the country, which made him very popular.

When Banerjee was arrested for publishing remarks in contempt of court, protests and hartals erupted across Bengal, and in Indian cities such as Agra, Faizabad, Amritsar, Lahore and Pune. The INA expanded considerably, and hundreds of delegates from across India would come to attend its annual conference in Calcutta. After the founding of the Congress in 1885 in Bombay, Banerjee merged his organization owing to their common objectives and memberships. He would serve as Congress President in 1898 and 1904. rishan was one of the most important public leaders to protest the partition of the Bengal province in 1905. Banerjee was at the front of organizing protests, petitions and extensive public support across Bengal and India, which finally compelled the British to reverse the bifurcation in 1912. Banerjea became the patron of rising Indian leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Sarojini Naidu. Banerjea was also one of the senior-most leaders of the "moderate" Congress-those who favoured accommodation and dialogue with the British-after the "extremists"-those who advocated revolution and political independence-led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak left the party in 1906. Banerjea was an important figure in the Swadeshi movement-advocating goods manufactured in India against foreign products-and his popularity at its apex made him, in words of admirers, the "uncrowned king of Bengal."

LATER CAREER

The declining popularity of moderate Indian politicians affected Banerjee's role in Indian politics. Banerjea supported the 1909 Minto-Morley reforms-which were resented and ridiculed as insufficient and meaningless by the vast majority of the Indian public and nationalist politicians. Banerjea was a critic of the proposed method of civil disobedience advocated by Mohandas

Gandhi, the rising popular leader of Indian nationalists and the Congress Party. Accepting the portfolio of minister in the Bengal government earned him the ire of nationalists and much of the public, and he would lose the election to the Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1922-ending his political career for all practical purposes. He was knighted for his political support of the Empire. Banerjea made the Calcutta Municipal Corporation a more democratic body while serving as a minister in the Bengal government.

Banerjee died in 1925. He is remembered and widely respected today as a pioneer leader of Indian politics-first treading the path for Indian political empowerment. He published an important book, A Nation In Making which was widely acclaimed.

The British respected him and referred to him during his later years as "Surrender Not" Banerjea.

Surendranath Banerjea was one of the early leaders in the history of the Indian freedom movement. He was a great leader and at the same time professor, newspaper editor and social reformer.

Due to his refusal to accept defeat he was known as 'Surrender Not'. He traveled around the country to spread awareness about the poor and exploited people of India through his speeches. He was a member of the Indian National Congress and even presided over two of the party's sessions.

The following speech was given by Surendranath at the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress in 1916 while moving the resolution on self-government. The resolution was a great step in the history of the movement, as this demand had never been made before by the congress party, which was the largest political organization in India at the time.

WHY SELF-GOVERNMENT

Why is it that we want self-government? We want self-government in the interests of the Empire to which we are so proud to belong. We want self-government in the interests of the administration and for the efficiency of the administration. We want self-government for self-protection. And finally, we want

self-government for the higher national ends, for the moral and spiritual elevation of our people. I say we want self-government in the interest of the Empire. Who knows what will happen twenty years hence? Who knows what strife, what struggle, what difficulties there may be in the womb of the future? Who knows that another war more sanguinary and more devastating than the one, which is now desolating Europe, may not again set in the world?

We have anarchism. What is it due to? I have no hesitation in saying and saying it from this platform, saying it publicly with all the weight of responsibility upon my shoulders-I will say this, that anarchism in Bengal is the product of past misrule (hear, hear). It has its roots in the economic and industrial conditions. We suggested this remedy in the address that we presented to His Excellency the Viceroy, We are asked to co-operate, but His Excellency left untouched the root causes of anarchism.

How has the Bureaucracy grappled with this? Repression is their only remedy. One coercive measure after another has followed in rapid succession-the Seditious Meetings Act, the Press Act, the Defence of India Act-and God knows what other Acts may be in store for us. And what has been the result? Anarchy frowns in the land and casts its darkening shadow over the horizon. Anarchy remains unchecked. The Bureaucracy has failed to grapple with it, as the Bureaucracy was responsible for producing it.

In the words of Edmund Burke conciliation and not repression is the sovereign cure of all public distempers, Grant us self-government and I will guarantee that in six years time anarchy will disappear from this land.

If we had self-government what do you think we should do? Suppose I was the President of the Republic-which I shall never be-suppose I was the President, what do you think I should do? The first thing I should do would be to pass a law in favour of free and compulsory education. The next thing I would do would be the separation of judicial and executive functions. The third thing would be to improve the police. And how? By importing into the higher branches of the service a strong Indian element capable of looking after the inferior grades. Lastly, I would abolish

the duty on salt. We have been pressing these things for years together but we could not get them.

We want self-government finally for the highest ends of the national system, for the moral elevation of our people. Political inferiority involves normal degradation. It is galling to our self-respect. The mind and the conscience of a free man are not the mind and conscience of a slave. A nation of Graves would never have produced a Patanjali, a Buddha, or a Valmiki. We want self-government in order that we might wipe off from us the badge of political inferiority and lift our heads among the nations of the earth and fulfill the great destinies that are in store for us under the blessing of Divine Providence.

We want self-government not only in our own interests but also for the sake of humanity at large. In the morning of the world on the banks of the Ganges and on the banks of the Jamuna the Vedic Rishis-sang those hymns which represent the first yearnings of infant humanity towards the Divine ideal. In the morning of the world before the Eternal City had been built on the seven hills we were the spiritual preceptors of mankind. Kashi was built. Kashi was flourishing before Babylon.

Our past takes us back to the dim twilight of history. In those days when world was sunk into barbarism we were the guides and instructors of mankind. Has our mission been fulfilled now? It has been frustrated but not fulfilled. It has to be fulfilled. It must be fulfilled so that Europe may be rescued from the gross materialism, from the degraded culture which at the present moment have heaped the battlefields of Europe with hecatombs of the dead. It is our mission to become once again the spiritual guides of mankind, but we cannot fulfill that mission unless and until we ourselves are emancipated, we ourselves are free. That is the first indispensable equipment for the discharge of that great mission.

When sepoy Mangal Pandey triggered off the First War of Independence in 1857, Surendranath Banerjea was about nine years old. It is quite likely that the event must have had some impact on him, for he grew up in a turbulent phase of Indian history. There was revolution in the air, and with strong influences

like Keshub Chandra Sen, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Bankim Chandra, Surendranath Banerjea was drawn into the eye of the storm.

After a brilliant academic record, Banerjea went to England in 1868 and cleared the coveted Indian Civil Service exam. He was later disqualified because he was supposed to have crossed the age limit. Not the man to let the grass grow under his feet, he moved the Queen's Bench and won. After a brief spell as Assistant Collector, he was framed in a false charge, and dismissed in 1871. His fault: he was outspoken, and was an Indian.

A brilliant scholar that Banerjea was, there was hardly any dearth of jobs for him. He was soon offered the post of Professor of English at Vidyasagar's Metropolitan Institution. As he rose in stature, he founded the Rippon College in 1882 where he taught for the next 40 years of his life.

His revolutionary activities continued in spite of his teaching career. He took over the editorship of The Bengalee and converted into the most vocal organ of the Freedom Struggle. He was held for contempt of court once and sentenced to a two-month jail term. Back at his chair, he severely castigated Lord Lytton's Vernacular Press Act, opposed the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, and the Criminal Law emergency Powers Bill recommended by the Rowlatt Committee. "The triumphs of liberty are not won in a day," he told his countrymen, "Liberty is a jealous goddess exacting in her worship and claiming from her votaries prolonged and assiduous devotion."

A man of unusual foresight, Surendranath Banerjea played a leading role in the first meeting of the National Conference held in Calcutta in 1883, but when the Indian National Congress was formed in 1885, he was conveniently ignored. He attended the subsequent sessions of Congress, and presided over the annual sessions in Poona (1895) and Ahmedabad (1902). He made his voice heard when leaders like Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh and Dr. Annie Besant were arrested. He was deeply hurt when the Moderates parted company from Congress.

When in 1905, defending his decision to partition Bengal, Lord Curzon declared, "Bengal partition is a settled fact", Surendranath Banerjea shot back, "I shall unsettle the settled fact." Curzon ignored the words, failed in his sinister plan, and went on to make an inglorious exit from India.

Known for his fearlessness and an inflexible will, Surendranath Banerjea earned the sobriquet 'Surrender Not Banerjea'. But this diehard nationalist made one tactical mistake. At the time when responsible leaders were either denouncing or returning their knighthood, Banerjea accepted one in1921. The immediate result was that in the election to the Provincial Legislative Council held in 1923, he was defeated by a non-entity like Dr. B. C. Roy. It is sad that this doyen of nationalism found himself totally isolated from his people in later years of his life.

"A few shone more brilliantly and with purer lustre," says Srinivasa Sastri in his tribute to Surendranath Banerjea, "but none excelled him in magnitude or spread of illumination. In steady periods and glittering phrases he formulated the ideal of Indian nationality and taught the full meaning and scope of Indian patriotism. Surendranath was the morning star that heralded the dawn of our public life."

Another stalwart, Bipin Chandra Pal said of him: "The one fact that stands out, above all else in the life and work of Surendranath Banerjea is that he occupies a front place among that glorious band, headed by Raja Rammohan Roy, whom history will proclaim to the future generations of his and other lands as the regenerators of modern India"

2

Early Awakener of Indian Political Consciousness

In 1895 Sir Surendranath Banerjea (1848-1925) was elected president of the Indian National Congress in its session held at Poona.

He tells us in his well-known Autobiography 'A nation in the Making' that as soon as the announcement was made in October 1895, the first and foremost task he had to do at that time was to prepare the presidential speech and that he found it to be a herculean task. He worked very hard every day for nearly six weeks. He has recorded that he used to check the results of his labour by turning the manuscript in his mind even while he walked about his house, correcting the errors and polishing his style.

It is now a fact of history that when the D-day came, Surendranath Banerjea delivered a very memorable oration which lasted for four hours. He concluded his address in the following inspiring words: We cannot afford to have a schism in our camp. Already they tell us that it is a Hindu Congress, although the presence of our Mohammedan friends completely contradicts the statement. Let it not be said that this is the congress of one social party rather than that of another.

It is the Congress of United India, Hindus and Mohammedans, Christians, Parsis and Sikhs, of those who would reform their social customs and those who would not. Here we stand upon a common platform here we have all agreed to bury our social and religious differences.

He was able to move and galvanize the audience and the entire audience enthusiastically stood up in a tumult of appreciative applause.

Dr Sachidananda Sinha (1871-1950) who had the good fortune of hearing Surendranath Banerjea speaking on many public platforms for nearly 40 years paid this tribute to him: For over 40 years Sir Surendranath Banerjea's supremacy as the most eloquent Indian orator in English remained unchallenged. All his public orations were marked by dignity, elevation, lucid exposition of complicated facts, sustained and fiery declamations, impatient exhortations, the power to touch the emotions making the hearers laugh and weep as the occasion may demand rallying battle-cries, and the thunderbolt of invective and not merely meek-spirited, dull, prosy sermons. All his contemporaries praised his energy and ideas and his intellectual and moral powers.

Surendranath Banerjea was born on 10 November, 1848. His father was a doctor who had studied western medicine in the first Calcutta Medical College. He tells us in his autobiography that at his home Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Culture strove together for mastery.

Surendranath Banerjea's father saw to it that his son was educated on Western lines. He matriculated at the Calcutta University in 1863. After he obtained his B.A. degree from Doveton College, Calcutta University in 1868, Surendranath Banerjea went to England to take the Indian Civil Service (ICS) Examination. He went to England along with Romesh Chandra Dutt and Bihari Lal Gupta. In his autobiography Surendranath Banerjea recalls with great feeling his journey to England from Calcutta: We were all young, in our teens, and the visit to England was a more serious affair than it is now. It not only meant absence from home and those near and dear to me for a number of years but there was a grim prospect of social ostracism, which for all practical purposes has now happily passed away. We three had to make our arrangements in secret, as if we were engaged in some nefarious plot of which the world should know nothing.

Surendranath Banerjea and his two friends Romesh Chandra Dutt and Bihari Lal Gupta passed the Open Competition of 1869

and proceeded to a probationary period in the University of London. All the three of them passed the ICS Final Examination of 1871 and returned to Calcutta in September 1871. Surendranath Banerjea was posted to Sylhet, as Assistant Magistrate and Collector in November 1871. After a brief career under an English District Officer, whom he found unsympathetic he fell into trouble over the trial of a case and was reported to the High Court and the British Government. Based on that report he was dismissed from service on the framed up charge of dereliction of duty. Surendranath Banerjea then proceeded to England to present his appeal to the Secretary of State for India against the orders of dismissal issued by the Government of India. His appeal was dismissed by the Secretary of State. This was a heavy blow and he writes in his autobiography: 'I suffered as an Indian, a member of a community that lay disorganized, that had no public opinion and no voice in the Counsels of their Government.' It was the bedrock of this nationalistic conviction that influenced his subsequent political career in India.

He returned to India in June 1875 and became a Professor of English in one of the colleges in Calcutta. He gradually rose in the educational world of Calcutta, attaining great influence among the students to whom he lectured upon such subjects as Indian unity, the study of history, the life of Mazzini and the life of Chaitanya. He had resolved to stir them out of their indifference to politics while protecting them from extreme fanatical views. And with this object in view he played a key role in organizing the Students' Association in Calcutta.

He also founded Indian Association on 26 July, 1876 at Calcutta which was intended to be the centre of an all-India political movement. Surendranath Banerjea defined its ideals as:

(a) the creation of a strong body of public opinion in the country;

(b) the unification of Indian races upon the basis of common political interests;

(c) the promotion of friendly feelings between Hindus and Muslims and

(d) the inclusion of the masses in public movements.

When the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 was passed by Lord Lytton's Government, Surendranath Banerjea opposed it tooth and nail. By 1883 he had become Editor and Proprietor of the 'Bengalee' which he converted from an insignificant weekly into a successful daily newspaper. During the time of Ilbert Bill agitation, he was imprisoned for two months for contempt of court. He was elected to the Bengal Legislative Council in 1893 and continued as a Member till 1901.

In the meantime, the Indian National Congress founded in 1885 had already recognized Surendranath Banerjea as one of its leading members and appointed him to its deputation to England in 1890. On his return from England, he presided over the Poona session of the Congress in December 1895. He also presided over the Ahmedabad Session of the Congress in 1902. He reached the climax of his political career during the days of Swadeshi Movement and Partition of Bengal in 1905.

Surendranath Banerjea opposed the partition of Bengal and appealed to the Government of India in these words: 'My countrymen are suffering, and in their name and upon their behalf I urge you to do all in your power to bring about a modification of the partition of Bengal. I am sure my appeal will not fall upon heedless ears but will go forth from this meeting accompanied by a volume of sympathy which will have the effect of redressing our grievance and restoring many millions of my countrymen to contentment'.

With the publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals on 20 August, 1917, there was a permanent split between the Moderates and the Extremists. All the Moderates left the Congress and the Extremists took over. In the Viceroy's Legislative Council, Surendranath Banerjea as leader of the Moderates moved a resolution approving generally of the new proposals contained in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. He was knighted by the British Government on 1 January, 1921 and became a Minister in the Reformed Provincial Executive Council accepting the portfolio of Local Self Government and the Medical Department. On retiring from this Ministerial office in 1923, he finished his famous autobiography called 'A Nation in the Making'. He died on 6 August, 1925.

Surendranath Banerjea, like many other great Indian statesmen of his time, sincerely believed that the ultimate power of the outstanding orator came from his moral and emotional character. He identified it with ardent patriotism, the moral emotion of love for the country. Surendranath Banerjea spoke these words with passion: 'The qualifications of the orator are moral rather than intellectual. It is the emotions that inspire the noblest thoughts and invest them with their colour and their distinctive character. Let no one aspire to be an orator who does not love his country, love her indeed with a true and self-absorbing love. Country first, all other things next, is the creed of the orator. Unless he has been indoctrinated in it, baptized with the holy fire of love of country, the highest intellectual gifts will not qualify him to be an orator.'

This is not to say intellectual equipment is of no avail; his intellectual equipment, though important is subsidiary. The moral takes precedence over the intellectual dimension.

Much of what has been written about Indian responses to British rule in twentieth-century India has been dominated by retrospective perspectives: notably, of Indian nationalism or of British imperial self-justification, and of the shibboleths generated by each among its own constituencies. This has been overlaid by theory and theorising that distils from the historical material a more coherent set of perspectives than may have been available contemporaneously; and by left-of-centre positions that lean on and legitimate the anti-colonial nationalism.

This discussion attempts instead to understand some of the psycho-social and psycho-political dynamics of a colonised society. The relative absence of the explicit voice of the coloniser in this narrative is deliberate. Many of the colonised engaged with the empire as an implicit but ubiquitous, and then again as a somewhat stereotypical presence. For the purpose of this essay, it is also important that the term 'Indian' be provisionally treated as geographical shorthand rather than as an assumed unity or unproblematic identity. The complicity of historiography in retrospective ideological constellations inevitably makes the task of recovering contemporaneous perspectives somewhat complicated. This essay takes a strategically subjectivist view of the British Indian empire in attempting to approach the subject

not from the perspective of retrospective scholarly work, but from perspectives that can be seen to have been relevant to those who experienced that empire.

Given that much historical writing is compelled to rehearse the dominant perspectives that are the inevitable framing narratives of a field of study, this essay traces a history of the Indian nationalist movement, the narrative of which has been central to an understanding of Indian responses to British imperialism. This does not exclude the possibility of decentring some of the main concerns of writers who have written on the subject; there is much room for an opening up of debates on the actual experience of empire. This can be done by attempting to read, even into these dominant perspectives, voices divergent from or resistant to those perspectives-which is often difficult given the paucity of appropriate sources. And it can be attempted by reading the dominant narrative again, and re-presenting it with a restored blurriness that eschews the strategy of retrospective neatening.

3

THE 'NATIONALIST MOVEMENT': THE LEGACY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a neither particularly radical nor anti-imperialist or anti-British 'nationalist' movement, could be said to have come into existence. It sought more 'representation' for Indians in the government and administration of India, and was led by an elite, largely secular modernising and self-consciously modern group of professionals and businessmen, organised within a body that called itself the Indian National Congress.

Such men were well-versed in the histories of Britain, of British parliamentary practice and of a liberal political vocabulary that ostensibly provided the ideological possibilities of Indians being regarded as potential equals in the imperial venture, and therefore of Indian 'nationalism'. One of the Indian National Congress's early organisers, the Parsi businessman Dadabhai Naoroji, staked his claim as a British subject to a place in the British Parliament, which he won as a Liberal candidate in July 1892.

Equally, these men were open to other European ideas. The earliest coherent strand of thought in Indian 'nationalist' thinking has been identified as an economic nationalism which owes much to the experiences of Germany as a late industrialiser, and in particular to Friedrich List's argument on the need for protection for industries in a newly industrialising country so that they could develop to a stage at which they could compete with more established foreign competitors.

The strength of a 'nation' was centrally connected to its ability to provide alternative employment outside the agricultural sector for its citizens. Economic nationalists developed a strong critique of the damaging effects of foreign rule from Britain, and placed arguments in the public domain that ran contrary to the proclaimed British rhetoric of providing 'moral and material progress' in India through its beneficial rule. Classical and neo-classical political economy, as proclaimed in British official rhetoric, relied on the principle of 'comparative advantage', according to which countries producing what they were naturally suited to produce could with advantage trade with each other; India was naturally suited to producing raw materials for export. Indian economic nationalists pointed out that political control from overseas in the interest of an overseas country had distorted the development of India.

Evidence was produced to show that an Indian economy with strong trade and manufacturing sectors had been deliberately destroyed by British rulers before and during the British industrial revolution; the possibility of an Indian industrial revolution had thereby been destroyed. The 'drain of wealth' from India and its 'deindustrialisation' were causes and consequences of British economic prosperity. The germs of a now paradigmatic description of a colonial economy were thus laid out early on.

The most prominent of the early Indian nationalists were a cosmopolitan, often Anglicised, elite. Therefore, they were often discredited both by anti-and pro-imperialist writers (contemporary and retrospective) as non-representative of Indians generally and as self-interested and 'undemocratic' cliques. Public rhetoric aside, it is claimed, this was not a pan-Indian national movement but a small set of regionally-organised and often caste-based groups; people with pre-modern loyalties masquerading as a modern movement. In some versions of this argument, they were merely businessmen looking for more space to operate profitably in a colonial economy: seekers of a certain degree of 'dependent development'.

There is a certain amount of accuracy attached to these arguments, especially for later periods where businessmen's involvements in politics were motivated-and tempered-by their desire for more space in which to operate, but also by their need

for the colonial state's repressive apparatus to assist in controlling their workforce. But businessmen were by no means the best represented set of people among Indian nationalists; and the urge to nationalist self-representation and organisation as an aspect of the psycho-political conditions generated by colonial rule-among persons who were in many cases at least relatively speaking the beneficiaries of colonial rule, and who thereby contributed to undermining their own position-requires further study.

One of the shortcomings of this argument is that it neglects to make a clear definition of nationalism. A comparative framework would require an answer to the question of whether, or where, there has been a 'true' nationalism that is both expressible in a popular idiom and is not an elite-led movement. A more useful framing of the question might juxtapose the histories of nationalism(s) in India with the history of nationalism as a legitimating principle. It might be remembered that the 'national principle' was not universally acknowledged publicly before the First World War, and its implications were not even fully grasped at the end of the Second World War (the Bolsheviks placed national self-determination at the core of the Brest-Litovsk terms; Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points mentioned it, but it did not of course apply to the colonised, who were subsumed within the 'trusteeship' idea: their care was entrusted to more 'developed' nations, and 'trusteeship' was later also written into the United Nations' institutional structures). In the latter part of the nineteenth century, 'nationalism' was a possible way of legitimising claims to collective existence and therefore collective rights.

In learning to use the language of (Indian) nationalism, elite groups in India were appealing to a powerful principle that was on the way to being a radical force in European history. And because a central part of the British claim to the right to rule India was either that India was not and never had been a 'nation', or that British rule had the potential of making India, not yet a nation, into one, legitimate (Indian) collectivity under British rule. Since the collectivity pre-supplied for that purpose was 'India', not a 'regional' collectivity-say 'Bengal', where, by most accounts, the nationalist movement began-the national entity that had to be imagined was the 'Indian' nation. (Since it was Bengali intellectuals

who were in the first instance concerned with this imagining, as the first Indians to be subject to the full rigours of British colonial rule, it was logical that they in many cases projected the particularities of Bengal onto the rest of India.)

THE PROBLEM OF 'AUTHENTICITY' OR THE SEARCH FOR THE 'INDIGENOUS'

In the early years of the twentieth century, it is possible to trace a slight ambivalence in the internal debates among Indians on the role of the coloniser, whose presence brought resources of progress and modernity, as well as of disruption. The two sides tended to alternate, and even coexist; the figure of the 'good coloniser' (who in many cases was not a person but a tendency, a set of usable ideas, or a set of unintended consequences) disappeared with time, as the pressures of the struggle for independence made the interaction between coloniser and colonised more confrontational and the sustaining mythologies of benevolent empire more and more implausible. After the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre in 1919, where British troops commanded by General Reginald Dyer fired upon an unarmed crowd to 'teach the Indians a lesson', faith in the triumph of liberal principles and therefore ultimately of the argument for Indian self-government was impossible to sustain.

While the more vocal aspects of Indian nationalist politics centrally used a language that had much in common with, and drew legitimacy from, British liberal opinion, there were undercurrents and other discussions that were less explicit. Colonial education and indoctrination, devaluation by the coloniser of the 'indigenous' culture, and the partial internalisation of this devaluation also gave rise to anxieties, and eventually to searches to restore the 'indigenous' to dignified status, as dissatisfaction with being turned into a domesticated creation of the coloniser emerged. One of the problems that greatly exercised societies under colonial rule is that of the search for an 'authentic' identity, one that is not mediated or contaminated by colonial rule.

By the turn of the century there were already persons and groups referred to as 'Hindu revivalists' who believed that a revival and revitalisation of an allegedly ancient tradition in the

present would lift India to its proper place among nations. Despite the insistence of many of its ideologues, the claim of this neo-Hinduism to indigenous roots were shaky: it owed much to British Orientalist scholar-administrators' discoveries of Hinduism in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; the 'sacred texts' that formed the basis of its appeal to tradition owed their standing in many cases to British attempts to find the core principles of the society that they sought to rule in their early years in India. Movements like the Arya Samaj, which sought its wisdom and legitimation in the Vedas, allegedly the earliest known Indo-Aryan texts, which therefore contained the purest possible form of Hinduism, attempted to reach out beyond the confines of elite ideology, in part by providing in Indian languages a strong pamphlet literature that could be virulently anti-Muslim and very far from the intellectually respectable claims it sought to make elsewhere.

Nevertheless, by addressing audiences in English, it maintained a rhetoric that was at least assimilable to the hegemonic language of everyday politics. The anomaly of this situation did not go unrecognised, and yet it was recognised as inevitable. As the Arya Samajist Lajpat Rai wrote in 1928: 'Nothing is more humiliating than the necessity of quoting the testimony of foreigners in defence. The process in itself involves an admission of inferiority. But there is no use hiding the fact that the white peoples of the West are not prepared to accept and believe any testimony but that of persons of their own race and colour [...]. It was necessary to keep their needs in view.'

What the Arya Samaj owed to another late nineteenth and early twentieth century socio-religious phenomenon, the Theosophical Society, deserves further exploration: the Theosophists embraced Hinduism as 'ancient wisdom', providing for a colonised people the moment of legitimation that was not insignificant in their rediscovery of a Hindu past. In a social environment in which the culture and civilisation of India had been denigrated, continuously undervalued or considered inferior by the dominant values imposed by the colonising power, the suggestion that an Indian religion was actually considered noble by Europeans was an empowering one. Theosophy became the

route for many English-educated Indians to return to 'Hinduism'. The search for a Hindu golden age, marked by an Aryan civilisation, also linked up well with contemporaneous European social and intellectual currents, and provided the possibility, attractive to a colonised people, that they could claim a similarly noble racial origin to that of their rulers, thereby undermining the rulers' moral right to rule them.

How far Indian 'tradition' was itself invented or shaped under British rule, including the extent to which the categories with which Indians negotiated or contested British rule were themselves crucially shaped by British rule, are questions that have been raised by historians: the nature of 'caste', supposedly a fundamental building-block of 'Indian' society; the category 'Hindu' itself, and its inclusions and exclusions. The activities of officials keen to discover the essence of 'Hindu-' or 'Muslim law' and write them down for the sake of convenient governance, or census-takers intent on cataloguing the complexity of the social fabric into manageable categories, had created a spurious neatness to categories of religious community or prescriptive codes of social interaction, and cut them off from the ebb and flow of socio-political power in which they had once been embedded.

These entities then became the basis of effective politics. Once written down in administrative documents, and as political activity came to be based on these imagined categories, the categories acquired reality, retrospectively justifying the administrative imaginings. Colonial 'reality' was therefore to a large extent a creation of the coloniser. But it was a reality that the colonised inhabited, in the course of which they became habituated to it; they could in many cases imagine no other.

TWENTIETH CENTURY COLONIAL POLITICS AND THE PROBLEM OF THE MASSES

It is difficult to find the voice of the ordinary citizen, the somewhat mythologised 'subaltern' of the historiographical project that bears that name. Until the second decade of the twentieth century, however, there is little indication that this figure was of any particular relevance to the self-proclaimed leaders that wished to claim him (and it was usually him). Thereafter, the attempts

were mired in suspicion, fear and various semi-colonial assumptions, as the central figure in the Indian middle class imagination remained the coloniser. A few illustrations from the by-now well-worn narrative of the 'Indian nationalist movement' will help to make this point.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, politics in British India was beginning to take shape in relation to colonial domination. Among self-pro-claimed nationalist leaders, who sought to direct and control 'a nation in the making', there was also a growing tension between the borrowed but also internalised liberal idiom of legalistic, 'moderate' Indian political agitators that had so horrified Kipling in Calcutta, and the more 'extremist' ones who, in the early years of the new century, found prominence in the movement against the partition of Bengal and the ensuing Swadeshi ('of our own country') Movement (1903-1908). The latter had to find ways of reaching out to the 'masses', and sought therefore to find a suitable populist idiom.

The Swadeshi Movement was a response to the division of the province of Bengal, ostensibly an administrative measure, which was widely felt to be an attempt to reduce the importance of Calcutta as a political centre, and to create a counter-balance to the organised power of the Calcutta bhadralok, the middle-class 'respectable people'. The government created a new administrative and political centre in eastern Bengal in Dacca [Dhaka] and encouraged the founding of a new political group, the Muslim League, under the patronage and leadership of the Nawab of Dacca, an important Muslim zamindar (under British administration, a zamindar was a large landowner, recognised as a proprietor by, and paying land revenues to, the government).

This was to encourage Muslims to organise separately from the Hindu-dominated, and allegedly anti-Muslim, mainstream of a rising nationalist movement. The resultant anti-partition agitation was the most widespread and effective anti-government movement that British India had hitherto seen. The Calcutta-based, mostly upper-caste, Hindu agitators stressed the brotherhood of Hindus and Muslims, and accused the Government of deliberately pursuing a policy of divide and rule. Swadeshi also stressed the importance of indigenous manufactures, and self-strengthening

education, particularly in scientific and technological subjects-incorporating earlier nationalist debates about the need for national self-sufficiency and the nature of valid borrowings from the 'West'.

The movement spread quickly outside Bengal, with middle-class radicals organising boycotts and swadeshi demonstrations across the country. But in the search for a popular idiom, the extremists drew strongly on Hindu-and often upper-caste-symbolism. This could obscure the genuine attempt on the part of the Bengal swadeshi agitators to reach out across those limitations. Nevertheless, an undoubted legacy of the rise of 'extremist' politics was a rise in Hindu rhetoric in nationalist politics: the attempt to glorify historical figures who had fought against Mughal rule, now cast as alien and foreign; the worship of Mother India as a Hindu goddess; and more explicitly a reference to a glorious and untarnished ancient Indian past, identified with 'Hinduism'.

The possibility of counter-mobilisation on the basis of Islam had showed itself early on, especially as some of the more enthusiastic of the swadeshi volunteers used coercive measures to attempt to stop poor peasants in rural eastern Bengal (most of who were Muslims) from buying British-made goods. In the absence of cheap swadeshi alternatives, this was hardly practical-it could only be a sacrifice made by the more affluent. The result was sectarian tension and occasional violence as religious leaders, encouraged by government officials, told Muslims that their interests and those of the 'Hindu' agitators were opposed.

Ostensibly successful (the partition was annulled in 1911), the movement nevertheless ran out of steam as a mass movement by about 1908, with its protagonists forced into a campaign of targeting individual British officials in acts of terrorism, inspired partly by Russian anarchism and partly by a Hindu revivalist insistence on the nation as a mother/goddess to be defended by valiant sons. The 'terrorist' tradition, as it came to be called, had a long afterlife; in Bengal in the 1920s and 1930s, there was a steady stream of casualties among British Indian administrators, and British civil servants were particularly afraid of postings in eastern Bengal.

Gandhians. It is always said that the Swadeshi Movement foreshadowed the great Gandhian movements that allegedly led

to independence: Non-Cooperation (1920-1922), Civil Disobedience (1930/31) and Quit India (1942/43, though it is very doubtful that Gandhi had any control over the last of these). The first of these was merged with the Khilafat Movement. Among Indian Muslims, the danger to the khalifa remained an emotive issue with immense mobilisational potential especially after the defeat of Turkey in the war and the harsh terms of the Treaty of Sevres, signed on May 14, 1920.

In June 1920, Gandhi proposed an alliance on condition that the Khilafat movement accepted non-violence as its guiding principle. The ensuing alliance of radical pan-Islamic and Hindu opinion fuelled an immensely successful popular movement that was a total transformation of formal Indian politics. What was not clear at the time, and was not commented upon, was the almost colonial assumption among many Non-Cooperators who thought of themselves as secular intellectuals that the 'masses' wanted religion and would not be moved by anything else. (The secular intellectual's misgivings were not Gandhi's misgivings: he said repeatedly that he thought a politics separated from religion would be devoid of morality and would be alien to Indian tradition.) A quasi-mystical religious style of politics was thus often promoted by non-believers.

In this second-guessing of the 'masses', claims had to be made in their name, but their agendas were not central to the politics of the leaders they had somehow acquired. Religion, or a quasi-religious morality, depending on how one looks at it, was offered to the 'masses', but in a form that could place the Congress leadership in control. It was Gandhi who retained the right to interpret what correct behaviour was, and it was he and his deputies who castigated the 'masses' for not living up to the standards set for them. (This was the pattern with Gandhian politics.

The Gandhian elite claimed the right to make judgements on the Indian people's state of moral development. And if they seemed to reject given understandings of 'modernity' it was not because they saw themselves as anti-modern; they believed they were challenging established yardsticks of modernity and replacing them with more viable and more 'indigenous' yardsticks.)

The colonial government, when it wished to appear to negotiate, found persons to represent various pre-defined 'interest groups' or 'communities', entities often imagined into being, and given their apparent rigidity, by the processes of imperial administration. With time, elections to local bodies, and still later, to legislatures elected on the basis of narrow property franchises and electorates divided into 'communities', with severely constrained powers of legislation, came into being. This caricature of parliamentarianism was the highest form of institutional politics in colonial India: even in the last stages of so-called 'training for self-government', at the end of the 1930s, a legislature's decisions could be overridden by the Governor of a Province or the Viceroy of India.

In this context, the importance of making up numbers from among the 'masses' was one of political theatre staged before the coloniser. In order to force colonial rulers to recognise them, and therefore to negotiate with them rather than with the ruler's own loyalist notables, anti-colonial nationalists had to demonstrate mass support-this was a prerequisite for effective bargaining with the government. By demonstrating mass support, a group could demand recognition by the rulers, posing as interpreter of the popular will, as intermediary between the 'masses' and the government, and in effect offer to act as a buffer zone between potential popular unrest and the colonial rulers. Once a group was so recognised, it also gained a relative monopoly over voicing the demands of the masses it claimed to represent. Whether it actually did so or not is a different matter.

The left. This instrumentalisation of the masses was precisely what a more left-wing movement than Gandhi's could be expected to avoid. And the Indian nationalist movement's rhetoric, under the leadership of the Congress, had at least from the late 1920s given much space to the importance of the 'masses'. The differences between left and right wings of the Congress were based on how far these 'masses' were to be at the centre of their politics. Gandhi's ability to control the 'masses'-or at least the rural 'masses' who were vulnerable to his ascetic holy man image-was useful to the right who therefore chose to identify themselves as Gandhians. But from the mid-1930s, the left organised around the Congress

Socialist Party, correctly pointed out that this version of looking after the 'masses' was a form of control-of denying ordinary people agency in important matters concerning their well-being, their earnings, and their survival.

Therefore, the left's challenge to the right was in terms of organising and representing ordinary people: the kisan sabhas (peasant associations), the 'mass contact programmes' and the trade union movement broadly under the patronage and with the support of the (Congress) left, were the organisational forms that were to achieve this. With the growing importance of the communists inside the Congress at the time of the Popular Front from 1935 onwards, the reach of the Congress towards ordinary people could be said to have increased. This caused some anxiety on the right, but on the whole the numbers game of both electoral and agitational politics meant that they would tolerate this as long as they could protect their interests.

But because even the left agreed that the Congress should identify itself as a whole with the movement for Indian national liberation as a whole, this meant that 'class struggle' might be interpreted narrowly to mean struggles on behalf of the classes carried out within the Congress by its-often self-proclaimed-representatives. (Later on the Communist Party of India modified this posi-tion, during the Pakistan movement, when some compromises with the Muslim League on the basis that there were many 'nationalities' in India became possible: modelled on Soviet nationalities' policy that had of course already been abandoned in the Soviet Union with the need for Great Russian nationalism to serve the Patriotic War.)

However, businessmen's demands against colonial domination became national demands against imperialist exploitation. The cause of fighting imperialists because they were stifling legitimate Indian aspirations to development could disarm left wing critiques of Indian capitalists who were at least in certain contexts on the nationalist side. In some contexts, for instance when the Congress formed provincial governments under the 1935 Government of India Act from 1937 to 1939, this became a particularly difficult problem: the right wing of the Congress dominated the governments, and worked closely with British imperial officials

to suppress workers and peasants. Meanwhile the left wing of the Congress became the opposition.

Insofar as the records allow us to make this judgement (can the subaltern speak?) we can, however, say that this was still proxy class war, with factions of middle-class political activists dividing in terms of their loyalties to their class or to others' class. They cannot speak for themselves, they must be spoken for, was the left's implicit line, especially as 'communal conflict' and caste discrimination provided evidence of the masses' irrational behaviour. This was a central aspect of organisational politics: there was the possibility of an emergent leadership that was more 'organic' than that of the Congress members who were concerned with the masses, but because they did not fully participate in Congress politics their credentials were not recognised. Moreover, even if the Congress left tried to get them involved, the Congress right would have none of it. The CSP in Bengal complained, for instance, that the praja samities and krishak samities, peasant organisations that might have allied with a Congress left, gravitated towards the Krishak Praja Party, a predominantly Muslim-led party of mostly Muslim peasants, which was eventually swallowed up by the Muslim League.

The right. There was a relative absence of explicitly pro-capitalist or pro-imperialist right wing positions in colonial Indian politics; industrialists and pro-industrialists could hide behind a Gandhian rhetoric. Industrialists themselves claimed to be imperfect Gandhians in a less-than-perfect world: they held their wealth in trust for society, according to Gandhi, and were therefore legitimised by him, but had no intention of giving up their machines as Gandhi claimed was desirable. Proper Gandhians of an ascetic persuasion remained anti-machinery; they are sometimes identified as anarchists of sorts, but it is far from clear that this is an accurate description, given the authoritarian and controlling tendencies of Gandhi and his followers.

There was of course a radical right: some of them former extremists and terrorists, who had served time in (among other places) the dreaded Andaman Cellular Jail, where prisoners' deaths were routine but which was the zone of contemplation from which many terrorists emerged with new ideologies; some, indeed,

became communists through their period of study. From the 1920s, there was in India a wide interest in fascism, not necessarily fully understood; but there were sections of opinion that did more than vaguely admire Mussolini or Hitler, or the successes in national discipline, economic mobilisation and collective action that seemed apparently the central characteristics of fascism.

A determined group of ideologues of a Hindu race-nation-state set about producing an 'indigenous' form of fascism in earnest. Mobilisation through paramilitary groups modelled on the Black Shirts and Brown Shirts, providing schooling and indoctrination, martial arts and quasi-military training became central to this project. Defining the nation in völkisch terms, men like Savarkar, Golwalkar, Hegdewar and Moonje argued that the pitribhumi (fatherland) must also be the punyabhumi (sacred land), and since Muslims' sacred lands were outside India they could not be Indians unless they changed. The 'masses' here were arguably more important than to many sections of organised political leadership, but were not granted much agency.

'Collaborators', outcast(e)s and other marginal figures. There is a lack of documentation on this standpoint, in contrast to elite groups with a recognised place in the 'national liberation movement'. The coloniser often appears as a reified and undifferentiated figure in the colonised's views of him: the colonised, as much as the coloniser, operates by conventionalised and stereotypical constructions of the 'other' in any given argument; the result is a conventionalised and unreal argument with a straw man-which does not mean that power relations between the two sets of stereotypes are equal.

In India, with the exigencies of the anti-imperialist struggle placing even the communist left, potentially at least sceptical about the consequences of nationalism, in alliance with nationalism, the worst and most unforgivable of politics consisted in refusing the coalition of the 'national movement'. Women, in this scheme of things, were expected by the 'national leaders' to preserve the virtue of the 'nation' as mothers and wives, 'embody' national virtue, occasionally even emerge from respectability in exceptional circumstances in support of the 'national movement', only to be ordered back home upon the completion of a campaign of civil

disobedience, non-cooperation or satyagraha, strikes or 'mass mobilisation'. Many campaigns in support of issues concerning women-the age of consent for women being a strong case in point-provoked 'traditional' (and often male) outrage at the possible use of colonial legislative authority in a matter so 'indigenous' as sexual intercourse, especially within a (child's) marriage.

To the Gandhians, women's proverbial frailty was the downfall, potentially, of the virtuous movement as their love of luxury and ornament undermined attempts to wear khadi, coarse hand-made fabric that was heavier than the finer foreign-machine-made goods. Frail and ornamented women might also tempt the virtuous away from their duties to the nation and their vows of brahmachari (a word that means something in between celibate and student), or cause the male to fail in his duty to preserve his sperm and thereby his masculinity. And yet when they were not frail and ornamental, women also transgressed. Gandhi publicly denounced 'terrorist women' whose participation in armed struggle against the British was to him not only not non-violent but contrary to their 'nurturing' nature. During the Quit India Movement of 1942/43 Gandhi was particularly keen to persuade women guerrillas to give up violence and to give themselves up to the British.

These 'unnatural' women were paradoxically often part of a 'terrorist' movement that provided Gandhi the dialectic of his success; for if not for the presence of potential violence, why was it important for the British to negotiate with Gandhi? As he came in later campaigns to be seen by the British (encouraged by his businessmen allies) as a 'moderate', the continued importance of 'terrorist' and 'communist' alternatives-movements in which women had some prominence and some, albeit still limited, agency-gave Gandhi his bargaining power with the British as the lesser evil.

Women saw for themselves an important role in radical movements to the left of the 'nationalist' mainstream. They were able to overcome the constrained and constraining roles imposed upon them by a convention-ridden society extremely touchy about social change that appeared as if it might be the impact of the coloniser. In practice, the (male) guardians of 'tradition' could

present themselves as cultural nationalists, protecting an 'inner' and 'pure' domain of the nation from the depredations of the coloniser. But the radical left movements, both in theory and in practice, challenged this. Or did they? Women in the communist movement, typically eschewing marriage or at least the visible accoutrements of traditional marriage that they saw as symbolising domestic subjugation, could be seen as breaking the bounds of respectability that was allegedly central to their ability to reach out to workers and peasants; they had to visually retraditionalise themselves.

The problematic example of caste uplift movements under colonial rule is best illustrated by the career of Dr Ambedkar, of the Mahar caste, whose education (he had a PhD from Columbia University, New York) he owed to his patron, the ruler of the princely state of Baroda. Ambedkar's championing of the cause of lower castes, his refusal to have his movement coopted into the upper-caste dominated generic category of 'Hinduism' and his willingness to use British legislative and legal protection to further his cause has led to an embarrassment among historians as to how to place him in the metanarrative of Indian 'nationalist' heroes. Was his response to the British Empire that of a collaborator? What does it mean to strategically use British-or other-legislative authority, or more generally to use governmental capacity in the absence of one's own ability to wield it? Was his an instrumental use? If one is permitted to read Ambedkar's academic writing on public finance, one finds this to be very much in the economic nationalist tradition.

It is arguable that Ambedkar was used as a counterweight to the Congress by the British government in a protracted series of negotiations leading up to the Government of India Act of 1935, in which the British attempted to refute the Congress's claim to speak for all of India by finding as many voices as possible that claimed not to be represented by the Congress. At the same time, Ambedkar's attempts to protect his perceived constituency through leaning on British power and legislative authority were crucial in enabling some sort of representation in public arenas for untouchables and low castes excluded both from the 'nationalism' of the Congress's variety (which is now commonly seen as

'majoritarian' if not sectarian) and of the more frankly Hindu upper-caste dominated völkisch tendencies of the Hindu Mahasabha, the form taken by the Savarkar brand of nationalism, even though both of these publicly expressed the desire to eliminate the practice of untouchability and the social disabilities that went with it. By demanding separate electoral representation for Backward Castes, Ambedkar appeared to be diluting the 'national movement' and undermining the Congress's universalising claim.

Indeed, it is the Ambedkar manoeuvre that raises an important question about 'majoritarianism', sectarianism and colonial Indian politics. If 'untouchables', 'backward castes', 'tribals' and other liminal peoples in India were not considered by default 'Hindu', then 'Hindus' could not be considered the 'majority' in India at all. ('Tribals' in particular had been the subject of great contestation between Christian missionaries on the one hand and upper-caste Hindu reformers on the other, both groups attempting to coopt them and to reinvent them in their own image.)

Given the fact that 'Hindu' is to a large extent a residual category, taking positive shape and new forms under and in response to British rule, and continuing to be reshaped well into the twentieth century, a separate organisation of untouchables outside the category 'Hinduism' was a blow to both the majoritarian politics of the Congress and the attempted (instrumental) inclusions of non-upper-castes into the category 'Hindu' that was necessitated by the deliberately fragmented and sectarianised electoral politics of colonial India.

In the end, at least on this point, Ambedkar was outmanoeuvred by Gandhi, who went on a 'fast unto death' until Ambedkar withdrew his demand. Gandhi insisted that Untouchables were Hindus, and should not be separately represented; they could have seats in the legislature reserved for them as a proportion of the general (Hindu) seats. Ambedkar maintained, however, that '[t]o tell the Untouchables that they must not act against the Hindus, because they will be acting against their kith and kin, may be understood.

But to assume that the Hindus regard the Untouchables as their kith and kin is to set up an illusion.' The two men made what

is called the Poona Pact in 1932, with tremendous consequences for the colonial numbers game. 'Hindus' were now by definition a 'majority' in India.

'Muslim politics'. Indian Muslims have not appeared in central positions in this narrative so far. We have largely been following the mainstream narrative; and Muslims only appear in that narrative as anomalous or as stubbornly recalcitrant, refusing to accept the imperatives of a 'mainstream' Indian nationalism. (Those who did were referred to, paradoxically, as 'nationalist Muslims'.)

There is a separate narrative and genealogy of Muslim 'separatists' or 'separatism': a genealogy of the development of 'Muslim political consciousness' that in many narratives is a tale of the tragic and misguided 'two nation theory' that led eventually to the formation of Pakistan. The narrative suggests that Muslims were 'backward' in 'western education' and late to realise the benefits of national consciousness; when they did, they organised late and separately.

Marxist and quasi-Marxist versions of this narrative rely on the separate development of a 'Muslim bourgeoisie' as the explanation of a separate Muslim nationalism; but the case for a coherent and separate Muslim nationalism in India is as difficult to make as one for a coherent 'Indian' nationalism. Institutional histories of the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College, or biographies of the educationist and social reformer Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, at first allegedly an 'Indian' nationalist and then the father of the 'two-nation theory' set up this narrative in its nineteenth century version.

The imperfections and incoherences of ('separatist') 'Muslim' nationalism in India (usually, among Indian writers, not dignified with the normative term 'nationalism') have come in for more close criticism than the allegedly more 'complete' 'Indian' nationalism.

The 'separatism' of Muslims is often attributed to British divide-and-rule tactics, dating back to the creation of the Muslim League at the time of the Swadeshi movement. This is not inaccurate; for instance, it is undeniable that the successful separation by the British of Muslims from the terrorist movement in Bengal in the

1920s and '30s relied on such tactics. This is an incomplete story. Though some 'anarchists' (as they often called themselves) later became communists, or participated in the praja movement which comprised mainly Muslim peasants, outside certain minor successes of non-sectarian or cross-sectarian collective politics, a certain mistrust existed for a variety of reasons.

The fear of being swallowed up in a majoritarian 'mainstream' that did not represent their interests is a theme that can be followed closely in 'Muslim' responses to empire as much as in 'backward caste' ones.

The relative absence of Muslims from the Congress-led 'Indian' national movement was a matter of their learning the art of watching and waiting-sections of Muslim intellectuals, at least, watched with interest the way the Indian National Congress turned in the 1930s: if it moved strongly to the left, Muslims would seek to join.

If not, the Congress could not, as a Hindu sectarian party despite its public utterances, hold Muslims and represent them. Histories of Muslims, as a potentially insecure minority or a disempowered and impoverished slight majority (in Bengal) need to be written without recourse to a narrative structure that is centrally concerned with their failure to be true 'nationalists'.

There are other questions: fractures of class, political affiliation and social position cannot be answered in generic and non-individuated terms. Conservative Muslims interested in the faith, or in social control (for instance of women in public places), progressives with a liberal view of Islam, as well as many who were nominally Muslim but had no particular connection with Islam other than being identified by non-Muslims as Muslims, all ended up to a greater or lesser extent, and sometimes by default, supporting the 'Pakistan movement'. This is too complicated a tale to tell as a teleology of 'separatism' or 'Muslim nationalism' (in India).

Numbers, negotiations and the mistrust of the masses. A purist answer to the question of whether the disempowered leave coherent voices for the historian's retrospective access discourages us from looking in the gaps left for us by the above narratives,

as also from looking at what these or alternative narratives cannot tell us. The British Civilian Malcolm Darling rode through North India on the eve of independence, asking the question 'in what way are you not free?'.

The answers he received were ambiguous, perhaps geared to the audience's expectations, and refracted through multiple translations and practices; the messages Darling refined from these responses were those that were most of value or comfort to him. Perhaps, though, we can look at the last days of the British Empire in India's explicit presence (discounting the long afterglow of unfinished business, financial and economic linkages, Cold War and Commonwealth deals) in terms of the relative agency and renewed disciplining of the 'masses'.

From the 1920s, British constitutional manoeuvres for India warmed up, with slightly higher stakes after the 1935 Government of India Act. Indians could easily find themselves imprisoned in the colonial numbers game, debating whether a reserved seat here or there could be conceded, whether a proportion of the population was to be defined as 'Hindu' or 'Backward Caste' or 'Muslim'. Two processes were discernible: one was that of formal politics set up and manipulated by British governments in India and in Britain. The other sought to organise popular movements and speak for underprivileged groups in Indian society-with varying degrees of success.

It had become apparent, in the course of the Second World War, and certainly after the Quit India Movement, that Britain did not have the military resources to hold India by force after the war. The Viceroy, Lord Wavell, now saw the virtues of an orderly transfer of power to a government that Britain would be able to deal with after the war. The problem now, as the British saw it, would be to create enough agreement among the two main players in the negotiations, the Congress and the Muslim League, to effect such an orderly transfer.

Yet it was after the Second World War that the politics of the 'masses' had its moment, in part threatening to break away from the control of its self-appointed 'leaders', in particular in 1945 and 1946, the time of the trials of the Indian National Army (INA) who had fought the British Indian army alongside the Japanese, the

Royal Indian Navy (RIN) mutiny, the Great Calcutta Killings and their aftermath, and the Tebhaga movement of sharecroppers, led by the Communist Party of India among Muslim peasants who were often at the same time supporters of the Pakistan movement.

Here, popular politics at times seemed to be in a position to set the agenda-but in the end it was elite interpretations of the 'people's will' that set agendas. The post-war situation had led to massive cuts in employment levels as soldiers and auxiliary staff were demobilised across the country.

The anger and bitterness of the Quit India and famine years had not receded. To this were added further causes for concern by the day. It is difficult to disaggregate the various motivations for popular unrest. What political leaders saw was unrest, strikes, violence of various kinds, and almost millenarian expectations of momentous change.

The timetable for British departure was now greatly sped up. The colonial power and their two interlocutors, the Congress and the Muslim League, were in effect negotiating details while claiming to represent people on the basis of their interpretations of events that were impossible to clearly interpret. All three sets of negotiators feared that the 'masses' and their activities might take over control of events.

CONCLUSIONS

What can we make of the juxtaposition of the visible and the invisible, of the audible and the inaudible, within the structure of a narrative that fails to narrate what it sets out to narrate, and that refuses to cohere? It would seem that an 'Indian' set of responses to the British Empire in India cannot be described unless a self-proclaimed 'national' movement provides a structure to the narrative. But this merely reifies the category 'Indian', without enabling us to get any closer to non-elite figures, or indeed to relatively elite figures who did not belong adequately in the 'national movement'.

The 1980s and 1990s answer to this dilemma was to suggest that one should abandon spurious attempts at overviews, metanarratives, etc (imposed as much, if not more, by the narrator

than by the 'evidence') and concentrate on the 'fragment', which even when (or because) it was fragmentary showed up the flattening and distorting effects of the dominant perspective. This was part of a worldwide trend that perceived its project as left-of-centre: of attacking the pretensions to universality of perspectives that, because they were those of the dominant (white, male, middle-class, heterosexist etc), were in fact particular. However, this overvalorisation of the particular was in danger of producing a trend that could not relate to any universal categories, or indeed any wider perspectives.

In such a context, attempts to decentre 'Indian nationalism' as the main problematic of looking at the Indian past foundered on what might be called the residual nationalism of many historians of India, including many non-Indians whose identification with India's national liberation movement was genuine. Attempts to recover the histories of marginal and forgotten peoples in India foundered on the rock of the paucity of usable sources, given that the written archive was dominated by colonial documents, and then on those of the epistemological and moral anxieties that beset the human sciences from the 1980s onwards.

As a result, an old-fashioned elite historiography continued to provide the framing narrative. The tendency towards nationalist hagiography remained largely unchallenged, except where that nationalism tended towards sectarian definitions of the nation: a civic and inclusive nationalism was preferred to an ethnic and exclusionary one, but 'nationalism' itself was inadequately challenged.

The recent reappearance of an old demon has added a new twist to this plot. Since the late 1970s, any perspective that appeared to lean towards imperialist apologia has been systematically and justifiably attacked in scholarly circles, and it might be supposed that this discrediting has been so complete that a revival would be inconceivable. Late twentieth and early twenty-first century political developments, resulting in the revival of explicitly imperialist ven-tures on the part of the United States and Britain, have seen in some circles the revival of an explicitly pro-imperialist form of allegedly scholarly work, much of which has been read in neo-conservative circles in the United States and among New

Labour supporters in Britain, and has found a receptive audience on television and in the popular press. However, this literature has not been taken seriously among scholars and specialists; and the historiography of India remains, mercifully, largely free of this tendency, with a few sufferers from imperial nostalgia forced into sotto voce asides within an established anti-imperialist consensus in the professionalised field.

But to return to history from historiography, inasmuch as they are separable: the problem remains as to how far a catalogue of life in India under colonial rule is a record of responses to colonial rule. Disentangling the explicit from the implicit in terms of responses to British presence is difficult when writing about a society that had by the beginning of the twentieth century experienced over 100 years of British rule. To the extent that we can ask questions about the texture of a society, this has to be a matter of historical evidence, however imperfect and problematic this evidence might be. An Alltagsgeschichte of the British Indian Empire remains to be written.

4

Other Works of Surendranath Banerjea

Being among the earliest of Indian politicians in the pre-independence era, Sir Surendranath Banerjee established the Indian National Association that he later merged with the Indian National Congress owing to their common agenda. At a very young age, he cleared the British instituted ICS examinations, but was dismissed due to racial discrimination. He whipped up a strong protest against this.

Among the earliest Indian politicians during the British raj was Sir Surendranath Banerjee. He set up the Indian National Association that was among the earliest political organizations of that era. Later on, Banerjee became a senior member of the Indian National Congress. Born on 10 November 1848 at Calcutta in West Bengal, Surendranath Banerjee was intensely swayed by the liberal, progressive thinking of his father, Durga Charan Banerjee. Read on to know more about the biography of Sir Surendranath Banerjee.

After graduating from the University of Calcutta, Surendranath traveled to England in 1868 along with Romesh Chunder Dutt and Behari Lal Gupta to appear for the Indian Civil Service exams. Though he passed the ICS in 1869, he was dismissed because of a dispute over his right age. After this matter was sorted out in a court of law, Banerjee reappeared for the exam and once again managed to clear it in 1871. He was appointed as the assistant magistrate in Sylhet, but was chucked out due to racial discrimination.

Not one to leave challenges lying down his entire life history, Sir Surendranath Banerjee headed straight to England this time. Though he raised his voice against the injustice, his protest failed to deliver any positive result. However, during his stay in England from 1874 to 1875, Banerjee acquainted himself with the works of Edmund Burke and other liberal philosophers. Upon returning to India, Surendranath Banerjee instead started working as a professor of English at the Metropolitan Institution, the Free Church Institution and at the Ripon College.

In the time to come, Banerjee went on to launch 'The Bengali' newspaper and the Indian National Association in 1876. He employed these forums to address political and social issues like the age-limit for Indian students appearing for ICS. He rebuked the racial discrimination practiced by the British officers through public speeches all over the country, which made him very popular. After the Congress was set up in 1885 at Bombay, Banerjee merged his Indian National Association with it owing to their common agenda. He served as Congress President in 1898 and 1904.

He graduated from the Calcutta University in 1868, and on 3 March of the same year proceeded to England along with Romesh Chunder Dutt and Bihari Lal Gupta to compete for the Indian Civil Service. He passed the competitive examination held in 1869.

There were some troubles over his exact age, and though he was declared disqualified, the question was settle in his favour after a reference to law-court. Being successful in the final examination in 1871, he returned to India and was posted to Sylhet as Assistant Magistrate. Mr. Sutherland, the District Magistrate, did not look upon his Indian subordinate with favour and took advantage of a technical error to make a formal complaint to the Government against Surendranath.

A Commission appointed to inquire into the complaint found him guilty, and he was dismissed from service. There is hardly any doubt that racial prejudice was at the bottom of the whole affair. Surendranath proceeded to England and appealed to the India Office. Not only was the grievous wrong not redressed, he was not permitted even to enroll himself as a Barrister.

The prospects before Surendranath were indeed very gloomy, but he did not lose heart. He believed that he suffered because he was an Indian and made a grim resolve to devote himself to the task of saving his helpless countrymen from similar predicament in future. During his stay in London from April, 1874 to May, 1875, he equipped himself for this task by intensive study of various subjects which included the writings of Burke, Mazzini and many other great liberal thinkers and patriots of the West.

On his return to India in June, 1875, Surendranath began his new career as a Professor of English, first in the Metropolitan Institution and then in the Free Church College, and lastly in the College founded by him and named Ripon College, now known as Surendrnath College. He took full advantage of his teaching profession to make the Indian students inspired with a new sprit. For this purpose he delivered many public lectures in and outside Calcutta on suitable topics such as Indian Unity, Life and Teachings of Mazzini and the history of Shivaji, the Sikhs, etc.

In a speech delivered in 1878 he urged the young men of India to dedicate their lives and consecrate their energies to the good of their motherland. He was the most eloquent speaker that India has so far produced, and his inspiring address had marvelous effects on the young minds.

The great nationalist leader, Bipin Chandra Pal, himself a great orator, writing of his student days remarks on the very first lecture of Surendranath: "It made a very powerful appeal to our infant patriotism and lent new strength and even bitterness to the anti-British feeling. The audience carried with them from this meeting a new patriotic fervour." Regarding Surendranath's speech on Mazzini, he said; "The tyrannies of the Austrian army of occupation in Italy…made a profound impressionon our sensitive minds....We saw or imagined a great similitude between the position of the Italians under Austrian domination and our own position under British rule."

Thanks to the Brahmo samaj and particularly the eloquent discourses of Keshab Chandra Sen, the English-educated young men of Bengal were hitherto attracted by the programme of social and religious reform. But the eloquence of Surendranath diverted their minds to nationalism, and as B. C. Pal, himself a Brahmo, admits, "Surendranatha's political propaganda gathered a much larger following than that of the social and religious revolt." This transference of Bengali youth's interest and energy to the political regeneration constitutes the first great contribution of Surendranath to the national cause of India.

His second great contribution was the foundation, on 26 July 1876, of the Indian Association which was intended to be the center of an all India political movement. This was principally achieved by the all-India political tour undertaken by Surendranath on behalf of the Association. Its nominal object was to organize a public protest against the reduction of the age-limit of the competitors for the Indian Civil Service Examination from 21 to 19, but the true aim and purpose of the tour was the awakening of a spirit of unity and solidarity among the people of the different parts of India, through the sense of a common grievance.

Surendranath visited and addressed public meetings in a large number of important towns in North India as far as Lahore and also in the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras (1877-78). This propaganda tour of Surendranath constitutes a definite landmark in the history of India's political regeneration. For the first time there emerged the idea of India as a political unit, and its importance was not lost upon far-sighted Englishmen.

Henry Cotton, a member of the I. C. S. wrote: "The Bengalee Babus now rule public opinion from Peshawar to Chittagong. A quarter of a century ago there was no trace of this: the idea of any Bengalee influence in the Punjab would have been a conception incredible to Lord Lawrence … yet it is the case that during the past year the tour of a Bengalee lecturer, lecturing in English in Upper India, assumed the character of a triumphal progress; and at the present moment the name of Surendra Nath Banerjee excites as much enthusiasm among the rising generation of Multan as in Dacca."

The great popularity of Surendranath all over India was clearly demonstrated when he was sentenced to imprisonment on a charge of Contempt of Court for remarks made by him in his paper, the Bengalee, against the Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court for

ordering a Hindu to produce the image of his household deity in the Court. A wild outburst of indignation accompanied by 'hartal' all over Bengal such as was never before witnessed marked the political consciousness of the masses.

Far more significant was the public meetings of protest were held in Agra, Fyzabad, Amritsar, Lahore, Poona and various other towns all over India. Even a Pandit of Kashmir, ignorant of English, burstinto tears, crying, "Our Surendranath is in jail." Surendranath's successful tour had thus set the stage for a more practical demonstration of the newly awakened sense of political unity of I India in the shape of an all-India political conference sponsored by Indian Association. The first session of the National Conference held in Calcutta on 28, 29 and 30 December 1883, was attended by more than a hundred delegates from different parts of India. The second session, held in Calcutta on 25, 26, and 27 December 1885, was more representative than the first and the plan of holding annual session of the Conference in different parts of India was accepted.

For the first time in history a realistic picture of the political unity of India was held out before public eye, forestalling the Indian National Congress. The chief credits for this goes to Surendranath and entitles him to the epithet of 'Father of the Nation' which his greatful countrymen gave him.

Immediately after the conclusion of the second session of the National Conference in Calcutta, the first session of Indian National Congress was held at Bombay (28 December 1885). The questions and problems discussed in this two all-India political conferences were practically identical and the National Conference was merged in the Indian National Congress. Surendranath was not invited to the first session of the Congress till at the very last moment when, preoccupied with the second session of the National Conference in Calcutta, he could not attend it.

It was apparent that the first session of the Congress was less successful from every point of view than the National Conference, and this perhaps explains why the authorities of the Congress were particularly anxious to enlist the sympathy and support of Surendranath for second session of the Indian National Congress to be held in Calcutta.

The Calcutta session of the Congress in 1886 marked a distinct advance in its tone and spirit and henceforth Surendranath played a leading part in the National Congress and twice became its President, in 1895 and 1902. It is undoubtedly due to the part of Surendranath and colleagues in Bengal that the Indian National Congress came to be looked upon, after the second session, as the handiwork of the Bengalees. Such a view was expressed by Sir Syed Ahmed, Lord Dufferin and even the historian Malleson.

It is neither necessary, nor possible to discuss in detail in this short article the political activities of Surendranath as one of the most prominent leaders of Indian National Congress during the next twenty years. But reference must be made to the leading role he played in the unique agitation against the Partition of Bengal in 1905 and the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement which followed it.

The strong leadership and personality which he displayed throughout that memorable campaign, particularly at the Barisal Conference, made him the 'uncrowned king of Bengal'. The reception accorded to him on his return from Barisal to Calcutta, and all along the way, was such as a king might envy. His carriage was drawn by his enthusiastic admirers who had ultimately the satisfaction of seeing that he did unsettle the Partition of Bengal which Lord Morley had declared to be a settled fact.

He had reached the climax of his political career in 1906, and then set in the decline. The cleavage between the Moderates and the Extremists led to the steady decline of the Moderate Party of which Surendranath was the strongest pillar. The Home Rule League and the emergence of Gandhiji made the people lose faith in the programme of the Moderate Party, and the publication of the Montagu Chelmsford Report was the signal of war between the Modrates and the rest. The Moderates went down, and when they walked out of the Congress in 1918, Surendranath along with them practically walked out of the history of India's struggle for freedom.

With the zeal of a new convert Surendranath steadily worked to make the Reforms a success. He accepted the Ministry and also the Knighthood, which closed the eventful career as a great national leader. His unpopularity was demonstrated by his crushing defeat

at the General Election for the Bengal Legislative Council in 1923, and he retired from active politics and ploughed a lonely furrow till death relieved him on 6 August 1925.

Surendranath was an educationst as noted above. He was a great journalist and the Bengalee, edited by him, occupied a very high place in Indian journalism and made a conspicuous contribution to the growth of nationalism in India. In 1909 he attended the Press Conference in London. He was a member of the Calcutta Corporation (1876-99) and resigned as a protest against Lord Curzon's policy of effectively destroying its popular character. But as a Minister he had the consolation of restoring its democratic character. He was a member of the Indian Legislative Council for many years and did good work in that body. He had very liberal social and religious ideas. He advocated widow remarriage and raising the marriageable age of girls, and presided over the Provincial Social Conference.

It is great pity that Surendranath died, almost unwept, unmourned and unusing by the public excepting a very small class. Yet it should be remembered that Surendranath never abandoned the high ideals of his youth; only at the age of seventy he did not choose to follow the untrodden path which younger generations pursued in preference to the old one which, he believed, had brought the country within sight of the promised land-the dream of his whole life. It is possible to argue that the path chosen by him would also have brought us freedom; and though there might have been delay it would have saved us from the partition of the country and the many other evils from which we have suffered during the last twenty-five years.

Whatever we might think of such a possibility, it can not be altogether ignored and should make us more charitable in forming our final estimate of Surendranath Banerjee. In any case, it is high time we should cherish his memory and give due honours to him for what he did for the national regeneration of his country during the long period of about half a century, and not judge him today by what he failed to do during the fag end of his life.

Indian Association formed in 1876 was one of the pioneer political associations with an all India outlook. During the second

half of the 19th century India witnessed marked changes in social and economic life. One of the striking developments of this time was the growth of political consciousness leading to the birth of political associations and national movements for independence. Prior to the Indian Association Sisir Kumar Ghosh along with Sambhu Charan Mukherjee founded 'The India League' in Calcutta on 25 September 1875. The nationalist leaders like ANANDA MOHAN BOSE, Durgamohan Das, Nabagopal Mitra, SURENDRANATH BANERJEA and others were associated with this organisation. The League represented the middle class and worked to stimulate the sense of nationalism among the people and to encourage political education. With a broad vision of an all India outlook, the leaders kept the organisation above narrow provincial and communal politics.

But soon the League foundered and shortly afterwards Surendranath Banerjea founded the Indian Association along with his friend Ananda Mohan Bose on 26 September 1876. The leaders who were associated with this organisation were Sibnath Sastri, Kristodas Pal, Dwarakanath Ganguly, Narendra Kishore and others. Rev Krishna Mohan Banerjee and Ananda Mohan Bose were elected the first President and Secretary respectively of the Association. There was not much difference between the India League and the Indian Association in objectives and outlook. Both of them had worked to help the growth of national awakening and political unity among the educated middle class in India. The very name 'Indian Association' implied that national movement was assuming an all India character in outlook and approach.

The Association started its programme with a number of objects:

(a) the creation of a strong body of public opinion in the country;

(b) the unity of the Indian races and peoples on the basis of common political interest and aspirations;

(c) the promotion of friendly feeling between Hindus and Muslims and

(d) the inclusion of the masses in the great public movement of the time.

Prior to this Association there was no political organisation in Bengal that represented the interest of the middle class and the raiyats. The Association gave the young middle class community a political platform on a more democratic basis. The leaders of the Association were mostly educated young men, lawyers and journalists. Surprisingly it did not include big business leaders and landlords as members. In the words of Anil Seal, the Indian Association had worked as a pressure group for graduates and professional men, which claimed to represent 'The middle class'.

Being founded by moderate leaders like Surendranath Banerjea and Anandamohan Bose, who were also at the helm of its affairs, the Association was above extreme and narrow Hindu nationalism and parochialism. As a gesture of friendship and goodwill towards the Muslims, they invited Nawab Mohammad Ali to preside over its second annual conference. Indeed, the Indian Association had laid the foundation for the growth of national awakening and political consciousness that ultimately saw the establishment of the INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS in 1885, and for this Surendranath Banerjea deserves credit. In fact, the Association was the forerunner of the Congress.

Right from its birth, the Association started its work in right earnest. The reduction of age limit (1877) from 21 to 19 years for the candidates of the Indian Civil Service examination gave it an excellent opportunity to start an all India movement. Under the leadership of Surendranath Banerjea the Association strongly protested against this unjust decision. Surendranath was chosen as a special delegate to visit different parts of India to secure support for the memorial that the Association intended to send to British Parliament. Surendranath's tour of India was a great success. It enkindled a new spirit of nationalism, which helped to create a feeling of national unity on important political issues. He was the first politician to receive all India popularity. Under his able leadership, the Association demanded simultaneous holding of civil service examination in England and India and Indianisation of higher administrative posts. Besides, the Association led campaign against the repressive ARMS ACT, the VERNACULAR PRESS ACT, and exemption of duties on cotton goods. Public meetings were held in Calcutta demanding removal

of racial inequality between Indians and Europeans and reduction of salt tax. The Association gave its support to the BENGAL TENANCY ACT of 1885 and demanded self Government in India.

It is true that with the establishment of the Indian National Congress, the Association gradually lost much of its political importance. Yet it must be given the credit for initiating the idea of holding an all India conference with representatives from every province. The first Indian National Conference was accordingly held in Calcutta in 1883. The second National Conference, organised by the Association, held in 1885 in Calcutta. It coincided with that of the National Congress, which was meeting for the first time in Bombay in December 1885. The Indian Association expressed its solidarity and decided its merger with the Congress when the National Congress was organising its second annual conference in Calcutta in December 1886.

It is true that the Indian Association lost its earlier political importance as soon as the Congress began to function as an all India organisation. Even then when the PARTITION OF BENGAL (1905) occurred, the Association under the leadership of Surendranath Banerjea became very active. The Association, under the leadership of Surendranath, organised the Boycott and SWADESHI MOVEMENT against the partition, raised a National Fund, drew up a National Educational Policy and, in 1906, formally inaugurated the National Council of Education. Violent agitation compelled the government to revoke the partition of Bengal in December 1911. After the annulment of the partition, the Indian Association lost much of its political importance and continued its existence being engaged mainly in social works.

Vernacular Press Act, 1878 a highly controversial measure repressing the freedom of vernacular press. The regime of viceroy LORD LYTTON is particularly noted for his most controversial press policy which led to the enactment of the Vernacular Press Act on 14 March 1878. Earlier DRAMATIC PERFORMANCES ACT (1876) was enacted to repress the writing and staging of the allegedly seditious dramas. Vernacular Press Act (1878) was aimed at repressing seditious propaganda through vernacular newspapers. Introducing the Bill the Law Member of the Council narrated how the vernacular newspapers and periodicals were

spreading seditious propaganda against the government. The viceroy Lord Lytton strongly denounced newspapers published in the vernacular languages as "mischievous scribblers preaching open sedition". He remarked that the avowed purpose of most of the vernacular newspapers was an end to the British raj.

The papers that made the government worried were Somprakash, Sulabh Samachar, Halisahar Patrika, Amrita Bazar Patrika, Bharat Mihir, Dacca Prakash, Sadharani and Bharat Sanskarak. All these papers were said to have been leading the seditious movement against the government.

The Act provided for submitting to police all the proof sheets of contents of papers before publication. What was seditious news was to be determined by the police, and not by the judiciary. Under this Act many of the papers were fined, their editors jailed. Obviously this repressive measure came under severe criticism. All the native associations irrespective of religion, caste and creed denounced the measure and kept their denunciations and protestations alive.

All the prominent leaders of Bengal and of India condemned the Act as unwarranted and unjustified, and demanded for its immediate withdrawal. The newspapers themselves kept on criticising the measure without an end. The succeeding administration of Lord Ripon reviewed the developments consequent upon the Act and finally withdrew it.

Bengal Tenancy Act 1885 an enactment of the Bengal government defining the natural rights and liabilities of ZAMINDARs and tenants in response to widespread peasant discontent threatening the stability of the colonial system of governance. The PERMANENT SETTLEMENT gave absolute proprietary rights to landholders but was silent about the rights of tenants, although it vaguely recognised their customary rights. With the increase of population and rise of prices of agricultural produce in the nineteenth century, demand for land increased. In consequence, zamindars tended to enhance rents. The RAIYATs (tenants) refused to accept the zamindari right to enhance rent beyond PARGANA nirikh (rate) established by custom. Zamindars, as absolute proprietors of land, were not inclined to recognise such customary rights.

Another very important factor that contributed to the deteriorating relationship between zamindars and tenants was the emergence of a landed intermediate class contrary to the rules of the Permanent Settlement. The MADHYASVATVAs or intermediate interests acquired their rights by purchase. In the statute book, the madhyasvatvas did not exist. The law courts were giving conflicting judgements as regards the rights and liabilities of the intermediate classes and also of the peasants. The operation of the Permanent Settlement and the growth of commercial crops led to the rise of a rich peasantry which was quite close to the landed class in riches and social influence, but their rights over land were not very clear under the laws of the Permanent Settlement. The government tried to accommodate this class by enacting the Rent Act of 1859. But the discontents of the class did not subside.

From the mid-nineteenth century, peasant resistance movements assumed alarming proportion. In the 1870s, the landlord-tenant relation deteriorated so much in almost all districts, particularly in the JUTE growing districts of eastern Bengal, that peasant jotes were formed to resist zamindari attempts to subvert their claimed customary rights in land. To contain the situation and to adopt necessary measures to improve relations between landlord and tenant, a Rent Commission was set up in 1880.

In the light of the recommendations and observations of the Rent Commission, the Bengal Legislative Council enacted Act III of 1885. This Act is popularly known in legal circle as the Bengal Tenancy Act. The Act defined rights and obligations of intermediate tenancies and raiyati tenancies. However, inferior tenancies such as kurfa, barga, chakran, NANKAR, karsha and so on still remained undefined. The Act also enacted rules for undertaking a detailed Survey and Settlement Operation of all holdings and their holders so that a reliable record of rights could be prepared for different interests in land from zamindars to ordinary raiyats.

Partition of Bengal, 1905 effected on 16 October during the viceroyalty of LORD CURZON (1899-1905), proved to be a momentous event in the history of modern Bengal. The idea of partitioning Bengal did not originate with Curzon. Bengal, which included Bihar and Orissa since 1765, was admittedly much too

large for a single province of British India. This premier province grew too vast for efficient administration and required reorganisation and intelligent division.

The lieutenant governor of Bengal had to administer an area of 189,000 sq miles and by 1903 the population of the province had risen to 78.50 million. Consequently, many districts in eastern Bengal had been practically neglected because of isolation and poor communication which made good governance almost impossible. Calcutta and its nearby districts attracted all the energy and attention of the government. The condition of peasants was miserable under the exaction of absentee landlords; and trade, commerce and education were being impaired. The administrative machinery of the province was under-staffed. Especially in east Bengal, in countryside so cut off by rivers and creeks, no special attention had been paid to the peculiar difficulties of police work till the last decade of the 19th century. Organised piracy in the waterways had existed for at least a century.

Along with administrative difficulties, the problems of famine, of defence, or of linguistics had at one time or other prompted the government to consider the redrawing of administrative boundaries. Occasional efforts were made to rearrange the administrative units of Bengal. In 1836, the upper provinces were sliced off from Bengal and placed under a lieutenant governor. In 1854, the Governor-General-in-Council was relieved of the direct administration of Bengal which was placed under a lieutenant governor. In 1874 Assam (along with Sylhet) was severed from Bengal to form a Chief-Commissionership and in 1898 Lushai Hills were added to it.

Proposals for partitioning Bengal were first considered in 1903. Curzon's original scheme was based on grounds of administrative efficiency. It was probably during the vociferous protests and adverse reaction against the original plan, that the officials first envisaged the possible advantages of a divided Bengal. Originally, the division was made on geographical rather than on an avowedly communal basis. 'Political Considerations' in this respect seemed to have been 'an afterthought'.

The government contention was that the Partition of Bengal was purely an administrative measure with three main objectives.

Firstly, it wanted to relieve the government of Bengal of a part of the administrative burden and to ensure more efficient administration in the outlying districts. Secondly, the government desired to promote the development of backward Assam (ruled by a Chief Commissioner) by enlarging its jurisdiction so as to provide it with an outlet to the sea. Thirdly, the government felt the urgent necessity to unite the scattered sections of the Uriya-speaking population under a single administration. There were further proposals to separate Chittagong and the districts of Dhaka (then Dacca) and Mymensigh from Bengal and attach them to Assam. Similarly Chhota Nagpur was to be taken away from Bengal and incorporated with the Central Provinces.

The government's proposals were officially published in January 1904. In February 1904, Curzon made an official tour of the districts of eastern Bengal with a view to assessing public opinion on the government proposals. He consulted the leading personalities of the different districts and delivered speeches at Dhaka, Chittagong and Mymensigh explaining the government's stand on partition. It was during this visit that the decision to push through an expanded scheme took hold of his mind. This would involve the creation of a self-contained new province under a Lieutenant Governor with a Legislative Council, an independent revenue authority and transfer of so much territory as would justify a fully equipped administration.

The enlarged scheme received the assent of the governments of Assam and Bengal. The new province would consist of the state of Hill Tripura, the Divisions of Chittagong, Dhaka and Rajshahi (excluding Darjeeling) and the district of Malda amalgamated with Assam. Bengal was to surrender not only these large territories on the east but also to cede to the Central Provinces the five Hindi-speaking states. On the west it would gain Sambalpur and a minor tract of five Uriya-speaking states from the Central Provinces. Bengal would be left with an area of 141,580 sq. miles and a population of 54 million, of which 42 million would be Hindus and 9 million Muslims.

The new province was to be called 'Eastern Bengal and Assam' with its capital at Dhaka and subsidiary headquarters at Chittagong. It would cover an area of 106,540 sq. miles with a

population of 31 million comprising of 18 million Muslims and 12 million Hindus. Its administration would consist of a Legislative Council, a Board of Revenue of two members, and the jurisdiction of the Calcutta High Court would be left undisturbed. The government pointed out that the new province would have a clearly demarcated western boundary and well defined geographical, ethnological, linguistic and social characteristics. The most striking feature of the new province was that it would concentrate within its own bounds the hitherto ignored and neglected typical homogenous Muslim population of Bengal. Besides, the whole of the tea industry (except Darjeeling), and the greater portion of the jute growing area would be brought under a single administration. The government of India promulgated their final decision in a Resolution dated 19 July 1905 and the Partition of Bengal was effected on 16 October of the same year.

The publication of the original proposals towards the end of 1903 had aroused unprecedented opposition, especially among the influential educated middle-class Hindus. The proposed territorial adjustment seemed to touch the existing interest groups and consequently led to staunch opposition. The Calcutta lawyers apprehended that the creation of a new province would mean the establishment of a Court of Appeal at Dacca and diminish the importance of their own High Court. Journalists feared the appearance of local newspapers, which would restrict the circulation of the Calcutta Press. The business community of Calcutta visualised the shift of trade from Calcutta to Chittagong, which would be nearer, and logically the cheaper port. The Zamindars who owned vast landed estates both in west and east Bengal foresaw the necessity of maintaining separate establishments at Dhaka that would involve extra expenditure.

The educated Bengali Hindus felt that it was a deliberate blow inflicted by Curzon at the national consciousness and growing solidarity of the Bengali-speaking population. The Hindus of Bengal, who controlled most of Bengal's commerce and the different professions and led the rural society, opined that the Bengalee nation would be divided, making them a minority in a province including the whole of Bihar and Orissa. They complained that it was a veiled attempt by Curzon to strangle the spirit of

nationalism in Bengal. They strongly believed that it was the prime object of the government to encourage the growth of a Muslim power in eastern Bengal as a counterpoise to thwart the rapidly growing strength of the educated Hindu community. Economic, political and communal interests combined together to intensify the opposition against the partition measure.

The Indian and specially the Bengali press opposed the partition move from the very beginning. The British press, the Anglo-Indian press and even some administrators also opposed the intended measure. The partition evoked fierce protest in west Bengal, especially in Calcutta and gave a new fillip to Indian nationalism. Henceforth, the INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS was destined to become the main platform of the Indian nationalist movement. It exhibited unusual strength and vigour and shifted from a middle-class pressure group to a nation-wide mass organisation.

The leadership of the Indian National Congress viewed the partition as an attempt to 'divide and rule' and as a proof of the government's vindictive antipathy towards the outspoken Bhadralok intellectuals. Mother-goddess worshipping Bengali Hindus believed that the partition was tantamount to the vivisection of their 'Mother province'. 'Bande-Mataram' (Hail Motherland) almost became the national anthem of the Indian National Congress. Defeat of the partition became the immediate target of Bengalee nationalism. Agitation against the partition manifested itself in the form of mass meetings, rural unrest and a SWADESHI MOVEMENT to boycott the import of British manufactured goods. Swadeshi and Boycott were the twin weapons of this nationalism and Swaraj (self-government) its main objective. Swaraj was first mentioned in the presidential address of Dadabhai Naoroji as the Congress goal at its Calcutta session in 1906.

Leaders like SURENDRANATH BANERJEA along with journalists like Krishna Kumar Mitra, editor of the Sanjivani (13 July 1905) urged the people to boycott British goods, observe mourning and sever all contact with official bodies. In a meeting held at Calcutta on 7 August 1905 (hailed as the birthday of Indian nationalism) a resolution to abstain from purchases of British

products so long as 'Partition resolution is not withdrawn' was accepted with acclaim. This national spirit was popularised by the patriotic songs of DWIJENDRALAL ROY, RAJANIKANTA SEN and RABINDRANATH TAGORE. As with other political movements of the day this also took on religious overtones. Pujas were offered to emphasise the solemn nature of the occasion.

The Hindu religious fervour reached its peak on 28 September 1905, the day of the Mahalaya, the new-moon day before the puja, and thousands of Hindus gathered at the Kali temple in Calcutta. In Bengal the worship of Kali, wife of Shiva, had always been very popular. She possessed a two-dimensional character with mingled attributes both generative and destructive. Simultaneously she took great pleasure in bloody sacrifices but she was also venerated as the great Mother associated with the conception of Bengal as the Motherland. This conception offered a solid basis for the support of political objectives stimulated by religious excitement. Kali was accepted as a symbol of the Motherland, and the priest administered the Swadeshi vow. Such a religious flavour could and did give the movement a widespread appeal among the Hindu masses, but by the same token that flavour aroused hostility in average Muslim minds. Huge protest rallies before and after Bengal's division on 16 October 1905 attracted millions of people heretofore not involved in politics.

The Swadeshi Movement as an economic movement would have been quite acceptable to the Muslims, but as the movement was used as a weapon against the partition (which the greater body of the Muslims supported) and as it often had a religious colouring added to it, it antagonised Muslim minds.

The new tide of national sentiment against the Partition of Bengal originating in Bengal spilled over into different regions in India Punjab, Central Provinces, Poona, Madras, Bombay and other cities. Instead of wearing foreign made outfits, the Indians vowed to use only swadeshi (indigenous) cottons and other clothing materials made in India. Foreign garments were viewed as hateful imports. The Swadeshi Movement soon stimulated local enterprise in many areas; from Indian cotton mills to match factories, glassblowing shops, iron and steel foundries. The agitation also generated increased demands for national education.

Bengali teachers and students extended their boycott of British goods to English schools and college classrooms. The movement for national education spread throughout Bengal and reached even as far as Benaras where Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya founded his private Benaras Hindu University in 1910.

The student community of Bengal responded with great enthusiasm to the call of nationalism. Students including schoolboys participated en masse in the campaigns of Swadeshi and Boycott. The government retaliated with the notorious Carlyle Circular that aimed to crush the students' participation in the Swadeshi and Boycott movements. Both the students and the teachers strongly reacted against this repressive measure and the protest was almost universal. In fact, through this protest movement the first organised student movement was born in Bengal. Along with this the 'Anti-Circular Society', a militant student organisation, also came into being.

The anti-partition agitation was peaceful and constitutional at the initial stage, but when it appeared that it was not yielding the desired results the protest movement inevitably passed into the hands of more militant leaders. Two techniques of boycott and terrorism were to be applied to make their mission successful. Consequently the younger generation, who were unwittingly drawn into politics, adopted terrorist methods by using firearms, pistols and bombs indiscriminately. The agitation soon took a turn towards anarchy and disorder. Several assassinations were committed and attempts were made on the lives of officials including Sir ANDREW FRASER. The terrorist movement soon became an integral part of the Swadeshi agitation. Bengal terrorism reached its peak from 1908 through 1910, as did the severity of official repression and the number of 'preventive detention' arrests.

The new militant spirit was reflected in the columns of the nationalist newspapers, notably the Bande Mataram, Sandhya and Jugantar. The press assisted a great deal to disseminate revolutionary ideas. In 1907, the Indian National Congress at its annual session in Surat split into two groups-one being moderate, liberal, and evolutionary; and the other extremist, militant and revolutionary. The young militants of Bal Gangadhar Tilak's extremist party supported the 'cult of the bomb and the gun' while

the moderate leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Surendranath Banerjea cautioned against such extremist actions fearing it might lead to anarchy and uncontrollable violence. Surendranath Banerjea, though one of the front-rank leaders of the anti-Partition agitation, was not in favour of terrorist activities.

When the proposal for partition was first published in 1903 there was expression of Muslim opposition to the scheme. The MOSLEM CHRONICLE, the CENTRAL NATIONAL MUHAMEDAN ASSOCIATION, CHOWDHURY KAZEMUDDIN AHMAD SIDDIKY and Delwar Hossain Ahmed condemned the proposed measure. Even Nawab SALIMULLAH termed the suggestion as 'beastly' at the initial stage. In the beginning the main criticism from the Muslim side was against any part of an enlightened and advanced province of Bengal passing under the rule of a chief commissioner. They felt that thereby, their educational, social and other interests would suffer, and there is no doubt that the Muslims also felt that the proposed measure would threaten Bengali solidarity. The Muslim intelligentsia, however, criticised the ideas of extremist militant nationalism as being against the spirit of Islam. The Muslim press urged its educated co-religionists to remain faithful to the government. On the whole the Swadeshi preachers were not able to influence and arouse the predominantly Muslim masses in east Bengal. The anti-partition trend in the thought process of the Muslims did not continue for long. When the wider scheme of a self contained separate province was known to the educated section of the Muslims they soon changed their views. They realised that the partition would be a boon to them and that their special difficulties would receive greater attention from the new administration.

The Muslims accorded a warm welcome to the new Lieutenant-Governor BAMPFYLDE FULLER. Even the Moslem Chronicle soon changed its attitude in favour of partition. Some Muslims in Calcutta also welcomed the creation of the new province. The MOHAMMEDAN LITERARY SOCIETY brought out a manifesto in 1905 signed by seven leading Muslim personalities. The manifesto was circulated to the different Muslim societies of both west and east Bengal and urged the Muslims to give their

unqualified support to the partition measure. The creation of the new province provided an incentive to the Muslims to unite into a compact body and form an association to voice their own views and aspiration relating to social and political matters. On 16 October 1905 the Mohammedan Provincial Union was founded. All the existing organisations and societies were invited to affiliate themselves with it and Salimullah was unanimously chosen as its patron.

Even then there was a group of educated liberal Muslims who came forward and tendered support to the anti-partition agitation and the Swadeshi Movement. Though their number was insignificant, yet their role added a new dimension in the thought process of the Muslims. This broad-minded group supported the Indian National Congress and opposed the partition. The most prominent among this section of the Muslims was KHWAZA ATIQULLAH. At the Calcutta session of the Congress (1906), he moved a resolution denouncing the partition of Bengal. ABDUR RASUL, Khan Bahadur Muhammad Yusuf (a pleader and a member of the Management Committee of the Central National Muhamedan Association), Mujibur Rahman, AH ABDUL HALIM GHAZNAVI, ISMAIL HOSSAIN SHIRAJI, Muhammad Gholam Hossain (a writer and a promoter of Hindu-Muslim unity), Maulvi Liaqat Hussain (a liberal Muslim who vehemently opposed the 'Divide and Rule' policy of the British), Syed Hafizur Rahman Chowdhury of Bogra and Abul Kasem of Burdwan inspired Muslims to join the anti-Partition agitation. There were even a few Muslim preachers of Swadeshi ideas, like Din Muhammad of Mymensingh and Abdul Gaffar of Chittagong. It needs to be mentioned that some of the liberal nationalist Muslims like AH Ghaznavi and Khan Bahadur Muhammad Yusuf supported the Swadeshi Movement but not the Boycott agitation.

A section of the Muslim press tried to promote harmonious relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. AK FAZLUL HUQ and Nibaran Chandra Das preached non-communal ideas through their weekly Balaka (1901, Barisal) and monthly Bharat Suhrd (1901, Barisal). Only a small section of Muslim intellectuals could rise above their sectarian outlook and join with the Congress in the anti-partition agitation and constitutional politics.

The general trend of thoughts in the Muslim minds was in favour of partition. The All India MUSLIM LEAGUE, founded in 1906, supported the partition. In the meeting of the Imperial Council in 1910 Shamsul Huda of Bengal and Mazhar-ul-Huq from Bihar spoke in favour of the partition.

The traditional and reformist Muslim groups-the Faraizi, Wahabi and Taiyuni-supported the partition. Consequently an orthodox trend was visible in the political attitude of the Muslims. The Bengali Muslim press in general lent support to the partition. The Islam Pracharak described Swadeshi as a Hindu movement and expressed grave concern saying that it would bring hardship to the common people.

The Muslim intelligentsia in general felt concerned about the suffering of their co-religionists caused by it. They particularly disliked the movement as it was tied to the anti-partition agitation. Reputed litterateurs like MIR MOSHARRAF HOSSAIN were virulent critics of the Swadeshi Movement. The greater body of Muslims at all levels remained opposed to the Swadeshi Movement since it was used as a weapon against the partition and a religious tone was added to it.

The economic aspect of the movement was partly responsible for encouraging separatist forces within the Muslim society. The superiority of the Hindus in the sphere of trade and industry alarmed the Muslims. Fear of socio-economic domination by the Hindus made them alert to safeguard their own interests. These apprehensions brought about a rift in Hindu-Muslims relations. In order to avoid economic exploitation by the Hindus, some wealthy Muslim entrepreneurs came forward to launch new commercial ventures. One good attempt was the founding of steamer companies operating between Chittagong and Rangoon in 1906.

In the context of the partition the pattern of the land system in Bengal played a major role to influence the Muslim mind. The absentee Hindu zamindars made no attempt to improve the lot of the RAIYATs who were mostly Muslims. The agrarian disputes (between landlords and tenants) already in existence in the province also appeared to take a communal colour. It was alleged that the Hindu landlords had been attempting to enforce Swadeshi

ideas on the tenants and induce them to join the anti-partition movement.

In 1906, the Muslims organised an Islamic conference at Keraniganj in Dhaka as a move to emphasise their separate identity as a community. The Swadeshi Movement with its Hindu religious flavour fomented aggressive reaction from the other community. A red pamphlet of a highly inflammatory nature was circulated among the Muslim masses of Eastern Bengal and Assam urging them completely to dissociate from the Hindus. It was published under the auspices of the ANJUMAN-I-MUFIDUL ISLAM under the editorship of a certain Ibrahim Khan. Moreover, such irritating moves as the adoption of the Bande Mataram as the song of inspiration or introduction of the cult of Shivaji as a national hero, and reports of communal violence alienated the Muslims. One inevitable result of such preaching was the riot that broke out at Comilla in March 1907, followed by similar riots in Jamalpur in April of that year. These communal disturbances became a familiar feature in Eastern Bengal and Assam and followed a pattern that was repeated elsewhere. The 1907 riots represent a watershed in the history of modern Bengal.

While Hindu-Muslims relations deteriorated, political changes of great magnitude were taking place in the Government of India's policies, and simultaneously in the relations of Bengali Muslim leaders with their non-Bengalee counterparts. Both developments had major repercussions on communal relations in eastern Bengal. The decision to introduce constitutional reforms culminating in the MORLEY-MINTO REFORMS of 1909 introducing separate representation for the Muslims marked a turning point in Hindu-Muslim relations.

The early administrators of the new province from the lieutenant governor down to the junior-most officials in general were enthusiastic in carrying out the development works. Bampfylde Fuller was accused by the anti-Partition movement leaders as being extremely partial to Muslims. He, because of a difference with the Government of India, resigned in August 1906. His resignation and its prompt acceptance were considered by the Muslims to be a solid political victory for the Hindus. The general Muslim feeling was that in yielding to the pressure of the

anti-Partition agitators the government had revealed its weakness and had overlooked the loyal adherence of the Muslims to the government.

Consequently, the antagonism between the Hindus and Muslims became very acute in the new province. The Muslim leaders, now more conscious of their separate communal identity, directed their attention in uniting the different sections of their community to the creation of a counter movement against that of the Hindus. They keenly felt the need for unity and believed that the Hindu agitation against the Partition was in fact a communal movement and as such a threat to the Muslims as a separate community. They decided to faithfully follow the directions of leaders like Salimullah and Nawab Ali Chowdhury and formed organisations like the Mohammedan Provincial Union.

Though communalism had reached its peak in the new province by 1907, there is evidence of a sensible and sincere desire among some of the educated and upper class Muslims and Hindus to put an end to these religious antagonisms. A group of prominent members of both communities met the Viceroy Lord Minto on 15 March 1907 with suggestions to put an end to communal violence and promote religious harmony between the two communities.

The landlord-tenant relationship in the new province had deteriorated and took a communal turn. The Hindu landlords felt alarmed at the acts of terrorism committed by the anti-partition agitators. To prove their unswerving loyalty to the government and give evidence of their negative attitude towards the agitation, they offered their hands of friendship and co-operation to their Muslim counterparts to the effect that they would take a non-communal stand and work unitedly against the anti-government revolutionary movements.

In the meantime the All-India Muslim League had come into being at Dacca on 30 December 1906. Though several factors were responsible for the formation of such an organisation, the Partition of Bengal and the threat to it was, perhaps, the most important factor that hastened its birth. At its very first sitting at Dacca the Muslim League, in one of its resolutions, said: 'That this meeting in view of the clear interest of the Muhammadans of Eastern Bengal consider that Partition is sure to prove beneficial to the

Muhammadan community which constitute the vast majority of the populations of the new province and that all such methods of agitation such as boycotting should be strongly condemned and discouraged'.

To assuage the resentment of the assertive Bengali Hindus, the British government decided to annul the Partition of Bengal. As regards the Muslims of Eastern Bengal the government stated that in the new province the Muslims were in an overwhelming majority in point of population, under the new arrangement also they would still be in a position of approximate numerical equality or possibly of small superiority over the Hindus. The interests of the Muslims would be safeguarded by special representation in the Legislative Councils and the local bodies.

LORD HARDINGE succeeded Minto and on 25 August 1911. In a secret despatch the government of India recommended certain changes in the administration of India. According to the suggestion of the Governor-General-in-Council, King George V at his Coronation Darbar in Delhi in December 1911 announced the revocation of the Partition of Bengal and of certain changes in the administration of India. Firstly, the Government of India should have its seat at Delhi instead of Calcutta. By shifting the capital to the site of past Muslim glory, the British hoped to placate Bengal's Muslim community now aggrieved at the loss of provincial power and privilege in eastern Bengal. Secondly, the five Bengali speaking Divisions viz The Presidency, Burdwan, Dacca, Rajshahi and Chittagong were to be united and formed into a Presidency to be administered by a Governor-in-Council. The area of this province would be approximately 70,000 sq miles with a population of 42 million. Thirdly, a Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council with a Legislative Council was to govern the province comprising of Bihar, Chhota Nagpur and Orissa. Fourthly, Assam was to revert back to the rule of a Chief Commissioner. The date chosen for the formal ending of the partition and reunification of Bengal was I April 1912.

Reunification of Bengal indeed served somewhat to soothe the feeling of the Bengalee Hindus, but the down grading of Calcutta from imperial to mere provincial status was simultaneously a blow to 'Bhadralok' egos and to Calcutta real

estate values. To deprive Calcutta of its prime position as the nerve centre of political activity necessarily weakened the influence of the Bengalee Hindus. The government felt that the main advantage, which could be derived from the move, was that it would remove the seat of the government of India from the agitated atmosphere of Bengal.

Lord Carmichael, a man of liberal sympathies, was chosen as the first Governor of reunified Bengal. The Partition of Bengal and the agitation against it had far-reaching effects on Indian history and national life. The twin weapons of Swadeshi and Boycott adopted by the Bengalis became a creed with the Indian National Congress and were used more effectively in future conflicts. They formed the basis of Gandhi's Non-Cooperation, Satyagraha and Khadi movements. They also learned that organised political agitation and critical public opinion can force the government to accede to public demands.

The annulment of the partition as a result of the agitation against it had a negative effect on the Muslims. The majority of the Muslims did not like the Congress support to the anti-partition agitation. The politically conscious Muslims felt that the Congress had supported a Hindu agitation against the creation of a Muslim majority province.

It reinforced their belief that their interests were not safe in the hands of the Congress. Thus they became more anxious to emphasise their separate communal identity and leaned towards the Muslim League to safeguard their interest against the dominance of the Hindu majority in undivided India. To placate Bengali Muslim feelings Lord Hardinge promised a new University at Dacca on 31 January 1912 to a Muslim deputation led by Salimullah.

The Partition of Bengal of 1905 left a profound impact on the political history of India. From a political angle the measure accentuated Hindu-Muslim differences in the region. One point of view is that by giving the Muslim's a separate territorial identity in 1905 and a communal electorate through the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 the British Government in a subtle manner tried to neutralise the possibility of major Muslim participation in the Indian National Congress.

The Partition of Bengal indeed marks a turning point in the history of nationalism in India. It may be said that it was out of the travails of Bengal that Indian nationalism was born. By the same token the agitation against the partition and the terrorism that it generated was one of the main factors which gave birth to Muslim nationalism and encouraged them to engage in separatist politics. The birth of the Muslim League in 1906 at Dacca (Dhaka) bears testimony to this. The annulment of the partition sorely disappointed not only the Bengali Muslims but also the Muslims of the whole of India. They felt that loyalty did not pay but agitation does. Thereafter, the dejected Muslims gradually took an anti-British stance.

Swadeshi Movement emanated from the PARTITION OF BENGAL, 1905 and continued up to 1908. It was the most successful of the pre-Gandhian movements. Initially the partition plan was opposed through an intensive use of conventional 'moderate' methods of press campaigns, numerous meetings and petitions, and big conferences at the CALCUTTA TOWN HALL in March 1904 and January 1905. The evident and total failure of such techniques led to a search for new forms-boycott of British goods, rakhi bandhan and arandhan.

Theoretically, two major trends can be identified in the Swadeshi (Swadeshi) Movement-'constructive Swadeshi' and political 'extremism'. 'Boycott' was the weapon to make Swadeshi movement successful. Constructive Swadeshi was the trend of self-help through Swadeshi industries, national schools and attempts at village improvement and organisation. This found expression through the business ventures of PRAFULLA CHANDRA ROY or NILRATAN SARKAR, national education movement laid down by Satishchandra Mukherjee, and constructive work in villages through a revival of the traditional Hindu samaj sketched out by RABINDRANATH TAGORE. Swadesh Bandhav Samity of ASWINI KUMAR DATTA also played a major role in the effort for reconstruction. Rabindranath called such a perspective of development atmashakti (self-strengthening).

This, however, had little appeal to the excited educated youth of Bengal who were drawn much more to the creed of political 'extremism'. Their fundamental difference with the preachers of

constructive Swadeshi was over methods, and here the classic statement came from AUROBINDO GHOSH in a series of articles in April 1907, later reprinted as 'Doctrine of Passive Resistance'. He visualised a programme of 'organised and relentless boycott of British goods, officialised education, justice and executive administration', (backed up by the positive development of Swadeshi industries, schools and arbitration courts), and also looked forward to civil disobedience, 'social boycott' of loyalists, and recourse to armed struggle if British repression went beyond the limits of endurance.

Another controversy arose over cultural ideas, between modernistic and Hindu revivalist trend. The Swadeshi mood in general was closely linked with attempts to associate politics with religious revivalism. SURENDRANATH BANERJEA claimed to have been the first to use the method of Swadeshi vows in temples. National education plans often had a strong revivalist content and 'boycott' was sought to be enforced through traditional caste sanctions. Such aggressive Hinduism often got inextricably combined in the pages of Bande Mataram, Sandhya or Yugantar while Brahmo journals like Sanjibani or Prabasi were critical of this view.

The Hindu revivalist trend, together with the British propaganda that the new province would mean more jobs for Muslims did achieve considerable success in swaying upper and middle class Muslims against the Swadeshi movement. Despite eloquent pleas for communal unity propagated by an active group of Swadeshi Muslim agitators like GHAZNAVI, RASUL, Din Mahomed, Didar, Liakat Hussain etc there were communal riots in East Bengal. Some Hindu zamindars and mahajans started levying an Ishvar brtti for maintaining Hindu images. So a large section of the Muslim community in Bengal remained aloof from the Swadeshi movement and Hindu bhadralok, whether believing in moderate or extremist politics, took leading part in the movement.

Such a limitation of the spontaneity of the movement caught the attention of Rabindranath and other men of letters. Rabindranath, though considerably swayed by revivalism for some years, under the impact of communal strife, pointed out in a series

of remarkably perceptive articles in mid 1907 that simply blaming the British for the riots was quite an inadequate response.

Together with these cultural limitations, the history of boycott and Swadeshi movement vividly illustrated the limits of an intelligentsia movement with broadly bourgeois aspirations but without as yet real bourgeois support. Boycott achieved some initial success-thus the Calcutta collector of customs in September 1906 noted a decline in Manchester cloth sales. This decline had a lot to do with a quarrel over trade terms between Calcutta MARWARI dealers and British manufacturers. It is significant also that the sharpest decline was in items like shoes and cigarettes where the demand was mainly from middle class Indian gentlemen.

In spite of such limitations the Swadeshi mood did bring about a significant revival in handloom, silk weaving, and some other traditional crafts. Also a number of attempts to promote modern industries were taken. Thus the 'Banga Lakshmi Cotton Mills' was launched in August 1906 and there were some fairly successful ventures in porcelain, chrome, soap, matches and cigarettes.

A considerable variety may be noticed within the national education efforts in Swadeshi Bengal, ranging from plans for vernacular technical teaching to SANTINIKETAN of Rabindranath and DAWN SOCIETY of Satish Mukherjee. These were plans to combine the traditional and the modern in a scheme for 'higher culture' for selected youths. National Society of Education was set up as a parallel university in March 1906. Though National Education with its negligible job prospects failed to attract the bulk of students, still some institutions like Bengal National College or Bengal Technical Institute survived after a couple of years.

The emergence of Samitis was an achievement of the Swedeshi age. By 1908, most of these Samitis were quite open bodies engaged in a variety of activities-physical and moral training of members, social work during religious festivals, preaching the Swadeshi message through multifarious forms, organising crafts, schools, arbitration courts and village societies, and implementing the techniques of passive resistance. The Swadeshi movement indirectly alienated the general Muslim public from national

politics. They followed a separate course that culminated in the formation of the MUSLIM LEAGUE (1906) in Dacca. But it also helped to give a new dimension in the Indian nationalist movement by giving the anticipations of Gandhian mass satyagraha without the dogma of non-violence.

Partition of Bengal, 1905 effected on 16 October during the viceroyalty of LORD CURZON (1899-1905), proved to be a momentous event in the history of modern Bengal. The idea of partitioning Bengal did not originate with Curzon. Bengal, which included Bihar and Orissa since 1765, was admittedly much too large for a single province of British India. This premier province grew too vast for efficient administration and required reorganisation and intelligent division.

The lieutenant governor of Bengal had to administer an area of 189,000 sq miles and by 1903 the population of the province had risen to 78.50 million. Consequently, many districts in eastern Bengal had been practically neglected because of isolation and poor communication which made good governance almost impossible. Calcutta and its nearby districts attracted all the energy and attention of the government. The condition of peasants was miserable under the exaction of absentee landlords; and trade, commerce and education were being impaired. The administrative machinery of the province was under-staffed. Especially in east Bengal, in countryside so cut off by rivers and creeks, no special attention had been paid to the peculiar difficulties of police work till the last decade of the 19th century. Organised piracy in the waterways had existed for at least a century.

Along with administrative difficulties, the problems of famine, of defence, or of linguistics had at one time or other prompted the government to consider the redrawing of administrative boundaries. Occasional efforts were made to rearrange the administrative units of Bengal. In 1836, the upper provinces were sliced off from Bengal and placed under a lieutenant governor. In 1854, the Governor-General-in-Council was relieved of the direct administration of Bengal which was placed under a lieutenant governor. In 1874 Assam (along with Sylhet) was severed from Bengal to form a Chief-Commissionership and in 1898 Lushai Hills were added to it.

Proposals for partitioning Bengal were first considered in 1903. Curzon's original scheme was based on grounds of administrative efficiency. It was probably during the vociferous protests and adverse reaction against the original plan, that the officials first envisaged the possible advantages of a divided Bengal. Originally, the division was made on geographical rather than on an avowedly communal basis. 'Political Considerations' in this respect seemed to have been 'an afterthought'.

The government contention was that the Partition of Bengal was purely an administrative measure with three main objectives. Firstly, it wanted to relieve the government of Bengal of a part of the administrative burden and to ensure more efficient administration in the outlying districts. Secondly, the government desired to promote the development of backward Assam (ruled by a Chief Commissioner) by enlarging its jurisdiction so as to provide it with an outlet to the sea. Thirdly, the government felt the urgent necessity to unite the scattered sections of the Uriya-speaking population under a single administration. There were further proposals to separate Chittagong and the districts of Dhaka (then Dacca) and Mymensigh from Bengal and attach them to Assam. Similarly Chhota Nagpur was to be taken away from Bengal and incorporated with the Central Provinces.

The government's proposals were officially published in January 1904. In February 1904, Curzon made an official tour of the districts of eastern Bengal with a view to assessing public opinion on the government proposals. He consulted the leading personalities of the different districts and delivered speeches at Dhaka, Chittagong and Mymensigh explaining the government's stand on partition. It was during this visit that the decision to push through an expanded scheme took hold of his mind. This would involve the creation of a self-contained new province under a Lieutenant Governor with a Legislative Council, an independent revenue authority and transfer of so much territory as would justify a fully equipped administration.

The enlarged scheme received the assent of the governments of Assam and Bengal. The new province would consist of the state of Hill Tripura, the Divisions of Chittagong, Dhaka and Rajshahi (excluding Darjeeling) and the district of Malda amalgamated

with Assam. Bengal was to surrender not only these large territories on the east but also to cede to the Central Provinces the five Hindi-speaking states. On the west it would gain Sambalpur and a minor tract of five Uriya-speaking states from the Central Provinces. Bengal would be left with an area of 141,580 sq. miles and a population of 54 million, of which 42 million would be Hindus and 9 million Muslims.

The new province was to be called 'Eastern Bengal and Assam' with its capital at Dhaka and subsidiary headquarters at Chittagong. It would cover an area of 106,540 sq. miles with a population of 31 million comprising of 18 million Muslims and 12 million Hindus. Its administration would consist of a Legislative Council, a Board of Revenue of two members, and the jurisdiction of the Calcutta High Court would be left undisturbed. The government pointed out that the new province would have a clearly demarcated western boundary and well defined geographical, ethnological, linguistic and social characteristics. The most striking feature of the new province was that it would concentrate within its own bounds the hitherto ignored and neglected typical homogenous Muslim population of Bengal. Besides, the whole of the tea industry (except Darjeeling), and the greater portion of the jute growing area would be brought under a single administration. The government of India promulgated their final decision in a Resolution dated 19 July 1905 and the Partition of Bengal was effected on 16 October of the same year.

The publication of the original proposals towards the end of 1903 had aroused unprecedented opposition, especially among the influential educated middle-class Hindus. The proposed territorial adjustment seemed to touch the existing interest groups and consequently led to staunch opposition. The Calcutta lawyers apprehended that the creation of a new province would mean the establishment of a Court of Appeal at Dacca and diminish the importance of their own High Court. Journalists feared the appearance of local newspapers, which would restrict the circulation of the Calcutta Press. The business community of Calcutta visualised the shift of trade from Calcutta to Chittagong, which would be nearer, and logically the cheaper port. The Zamindars who owned vast landed estates both in west and east

Bengal foresaw the necessity of maintaining separate establishments at Dhaka that would involve extra expenditure.

The educated Bengali Hindus felt that it was a deliberate blow inflicted by Curzon at the national consciousness and growing solidarity of the Bengali-speaking population. The Hindus of Bengal, who controlled most of Bengal's commerce and the different professions and led the rural society, opined that the Bengalee nation would be divided, making them a minority in a province including the whole of Bihar and Orissa. They complained that it was a veiled attempt by Curzon to strangle the spirit of nationalism in Bengal. They strongly believed that it was the prime object of the government to encourage the growth of a Muslim power in eastern Bengal as a counterpoise to thwart the rapidly growing strength of the educated Hindu community. Economic, political and communal interests combined together to intensify the opposition against the partition measure.

The Indian and specially the Bengali press opposed the partition move from the very beginning. The British press, the Anglo-Indian press and even some administrators also opposed the intended measure. The partition evoked fierce protest in west Bengal, especially in Calcutta and gave a new fillip to Indian nationalism. Henceforth, the INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS was destined to become the main platform of the Indian nationalist movement. It exhibited unusual strength and vigour and shifted from a middle-class pressure group to a nation-wide mass organisation.

The leadership of the Indian National Congress viewed the partition as an attempt to 'divide and rule' and as a proof of the government's vindictive antipathy towards the outspoken Bhadralok intellectuals. Mother-goddess worshipping Bengali Hindus believed that the partition was tantamount to the vivisection of their 'Mother province'. 'Bande-Mataram' (Hail Motherland) almost became the national anthem of the Indian National Congress. Defeat of the partition became the immediate target of Bengalee nationalism. Agitation against the partition manifested itself in the form of mass meetings, rural unrest and a SWADESHI MOVEMENT to boycott the import of British manufactured goods. Swadeshi and Boycott were the twin

weapons of this nationalism and Swaraj (self-government) its main objective. Swaraj was first mentioned in the presidential address of Dadabhai Naoroji as the Congress goal at its Calcutta session in 1906.

Leaders like SURENDRANATH BANERJEA along with journalists like Krishna Kumar Mitra, editor of the Sanjivani (13 July 1905) urged the people to boycott British goods, observe mourning and sever all contact with official bodies. In a meeting held at Calcutta on 7 August 1905 (hailed as the birthday of Indian nationalism) a resolution to abstain from purchases of British products so long as 'Partition resolution is not withdrawn' was accepted with acclaim. This national spirit was popularised by the patriotic songs of DWIJENDRALAL ROY, RAJANIKANTA SEN and RABINDRANATH TAGORE. As with other political movements of the day this also took on religious overtones. Pujas were offered to emphasise the solemn nature of the occasion.

The Hindu religious fervour reached its peak on 28 September 1905, the day of the Mahalaya, the new-moon day before the puja, and thousands of Hindus gathered at the Kali temple in Calcutta. In Bengal the worship of Kali, wife of Shiva, had always been very popular. She possessed a two-dimensional character with mingled attributes both generative and destructive. Simultaneously she took great pleasure in bloody sacrifices but she was also venerated as the great Mother associated with the conception of Bengal as the Motherland. This conception offered a solid basis for the support of political objectives stimulated by religious excitement. Kali was accepted as a symbol of the Motherland, and the priest administered the Swadeshi vow. Such a religious flavour could and did give the movement a widespread appeal among the Hindu masses, but by the same token that flavour aroused hostility in average Muslim minds. Huge protest rallies before and after Bengal's division on 16 October 1905 attracted millions of people heretofore not involved in politics.

The Swadeshi Movement as an economic movement would have been quite acceptable to the Muslims, but as the movement was used as a weapon against the partition (which the greater body of the Muslims supported) and as it often had a religious colouring added to it, it antagonised Muslim minds.

The new tide of national sentiment against the Partition of Bengal originating in Bengal spilled over into different regions in India Punjab, Central Provinces, Poona, Madras, Bombay and other cities. Instead of wearing foreign made outfits, the Indians vowed to use only swadeshi (indigenous) cottons and other clothing materials made in India. Foreign garments were viewed as hateful imports. The Swadeshi Movement soon stimulated local enterprise in many areas; from Indian cotton mills to match factories, glassblowing shops, iron and steel foundries. The agitation also generated increased demands for national education. Bengali teachers and students extended their boycott of British goods to English schools and college classrooms. The movement for national education spread throughout Bengal and reached even as far as Benaras where Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya founded his private Benaras Hindu University in 1910.

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reached its peak from 1908 through 1910, as did the severity of official repression and the number of 'preventive detention' arrests.

The new militant spirit was reflected in the columns of the nationalist newspapers, notably the Bande Mataram, Sandhya and Jugantar. The press assisted a great deal to disseminate revolutionary ideas. In 1907, the Indian National Congress at its annual session in Surat split into two groups-one being moderate, liberal, and evolutionary; and the other extremist, militant and revolutionary. The young militants of Bal Gangadhar Tilak's extremist party supported the 'cult of the bomb and the gun' while the moderate leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Surendranath Banerjea cautioned against such extremist actions fearing it might lead to anarchy and uncontrollable violence. Surendranath Banerjea, though one of the front-rank leaders of the anti-Partition agitation, was not in favour of terrorist activities.

When the proposal for partition was first published in 1903 there was expression of Muslim opposition to the scheme. The MOSLEM CHRONICLE, the CENTRAL NATIONAL MUHAMEDAN ASSOCIATION, CHOWDHURY KAZEMUDDIN AHMAD SIDDIKY and Delwar Hossain Ahmed condemned the proposed measure. Even Nawab SALIMULLAH termed the suggestion as 'beastly' at the initial stage. In the beginning the main criticism from the Muslim side was against any part of an enlightened and advanced province of Bengal passing under the rule of a chief commissioner. They felt that thereby, their educational, social and other interests would suffer, and there is no doubt that the Muslims also felt that the proposed measure would threaten Bengali solidarity. The Muslim intelligentsia, however, criticised the ideas of extremist militant nationalism as being against the spirit of Islam. The Muslim press urged its educated co-religionists to remain faithful to the government. On the whole the Swadeshi preachers were not able to influence and arouse the predominantly Muslim masses in east Bengal. The anti-partition trend in the thought process of the Muslims did not continue for long. When the wider scheme of a self contained separate province was known to the educated section of the Muslims they soon changed their views. They realised that the partition would be a boon to them and that their special

difficulties would receive greater attention from the new administration.

The Muslims accorded a warm welcome to the new Lieutenant-Governor BAMPFYLDE FULLER. Even the Moslem Chronicle soon changed its attitude in favour of partition. Some Muslims in Calcutta also welcomed the creation of the new province. The MOHAMMEDAN LITERARY SOCIETY brought out a manifesto in 1905 signed by seven leading Muslim personalities. The manifesto was circulated to the different Muslim societies of both west and east Bengal and urged the Muslims to give their unqualified support to the partition measure. The creation of the new province provided an incentive to the Muslims to unite into a compact body and form an association to voice their own views and aspiration relating to social and political matters. On 16 October 1905 the Mohammedan Provincial Union was founded. All the existing organisations and societies were invited to affiliate themselves with it and Salimullah was unanimously chosen as its patron.

Even then there was a group of educated liberal Muslims who came forward and tendered support to the anti-partition agitation and the Swadeshi Movement. Though their number was insignificant, yet their role added a new dimension in the thought process of the Muslims. This broad-minded group supported the Indian National Congress and opposed the partition. The most prominent among this section of the Muslims was KHWAZA ATIQULLAH. At the Calcutta session of the Congress (1906), he moved a resolution denouncing the partition of Bengal. ABDUR RASUL, Khan Bahadur Muhammad Yusuf (a pleader and a member of the Management Committee of the Central National Muhamedan Association), Mujibur Rahman, AH ABDUL HALIM GHAZNAVI, ISMAIL HOSSAIN SHIRAJI, Muhammad Gholam Hossain (a writer and a promoter of Hindu-Muslim unity), Maulvi Liaqat Hussain (a liberal Muslim who vehemently opposed the 'Divide and Rule' policy of the British), Syed Hafizur Rahman Chowdhury of Bogra and Abul Kasem of Burdwan inspired Muslims to join the anti-Partition agitation. There were even a few Muslim preachers of Swadeshi ideas, like Din Muhammad of Mymensingh and Abdul Gaffar of Chittagong. It needs to be

mentioned that some of the liberal nationalist Muslims like AH Ghaznavi and Khan Bahadur Muhammad Yusuf supported the Swadeshi Movement but not the Boycott agitation.

A section of the Muslim press tried to promote harmonious relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. AK FAZLUL HUQ and Nibaran Chandra Das preached non-communal ideas through their weekly Balaka (1901, Barisal) and monthly Bharat Suhrd (1901, Barisal). Only a small section of Muslim intellectuals could rise above their sectarian outlook and join with the Congress in the anti-partition agitation and constitutional politics.

The general trend of thoughts in the Muslim minds was in favour of partition. The All India MUSLIM LEAGUE, founded in 1906, supported the partition. In the meeting of the Imperial Council in 1910 Shamsul Huda of Bengal and Mazhar-ul-Huq from Bihar spoke in favour of the partition.

The traditional and reformist Muslim groups-the Faraizi, Wahabi and Taiyuni-supported the partition. Consequently an orthodox trend was visible in the political attitude of the Muslims. The Bengali Muslim press in general lent support to the partition. The Islam Pracharak described Swadeshi as a Hindu movement and expressed grave concern saying that it would bring hardship to the common people. The Muslim intelligentsia in general felt concerned about the suffering of their co-religionists caused by it. They particularly disliked the movement as it was tied to the anti-partition agitation. Reputed litterateurs like MIR MOSHARRAF HOSSAIN were virulent critics of the Swadeshi Movement. The greater body of Muslims at all levels remained opposed to the Swadeshi Movement since it was used as a weapon against the partition and a religious tone was added to it.

The economic aspect of the movement was partly responsible for encouraging separatist forces within the Muslim society. The superiority of the Hindus in the sphere of trade and industry alarmed the Muslims. Fear of socio-economic domination by the Hindus made them alert to safeguard their own interests. These apprehensions brought about a rift in Hindu-Muslims relations. In order to avoid economic exploitation by the Hindus, some wealthy Muslim entrepreneurs came forward to launch new commercial ventures. One good attempt was the founding of

steamer companies operating between Chittagong and Rangoon in 1906.

In the context of the partition the pattern of the land system in Bengal played a major role to influence the Muslim mind. The absentee Hindu zamindars made no attempt to improve the lot of the RAIYATs who were mostly Muslims. The agrarian disputes (between landlords and tenants) already in existence in the province also appeared to take a communal colour. It was alleged that the Hindu landlords had been attempting to enforce Swadeshi ideas on the tenants and induce them to join the anti-partition movement.

In 1906, the Muslims organised an Islamic conference at Keraniganj in Dhaka as a move to emphasise their separate identity as a community. The Swadeshi Movement with its Hindu religious flavour fomented aggressive reaction from the other community. A red pamphlet of a highly inflammatory nature was circulated among the Muslim masses of Eastern Bengal and Assam urging them completely to dissociate from the Hindus. It was published under the auspices of the ANJUMAN-I-MUFIDUL ISLAM under the editorship of a certain Ibrahim Khan. Moreover, such irritating moves as the adoption of the Bande Mataram as the song of inspiration or introduction of the cult of Shivaji as a national hero, and reports of communal violence alienated the Muslims. One inevitable result of such preaching was the riot that broke out at Comilla in March 1907, followed by similar riots in Jamalpur in April of that year. These communal disturbances became a familiar feature in Eastern Bengal and Assam and followed a pattern that was repeated elsewhere. The 1907 riots represent a watershed in the history of modern Bengal.

While Hindu-Muslims relations deteriorated, political changes of great magnitude were taking place in the Government of India's policies, and simultaneously in the relations of Bengali Muslim leaders with their non-Bengalee counterparts. Both developments had major repercussions on communal relations in eastern Bengal. The decision to introduce constitutional reforms culminating in the MORLEY-MINTO REFORMS of 1909 introducing separate representation for the Muslims marked a turning point in Hindu-Muslim relations.

The early administrators of the new province from the lieutenant governor down to the junior-most officials in general were enthusiastic in carrying out the development works. Bampfylde Fuller was accused by the anti-Partition movement leaders as being extremely partial to Muslims. He, because of a difference with the Government of India, resigned in August 1906. His resignation and its prompt acceptance were considered by the Muslims to be a solid political victory for the Hindus. The general Muslim feeling was that in yielding to the pressure of the anti-Partition agitators the government had revealed its weakness and had overlooked the loyal adherence of the Muslims to the government.

Consequently, the antagonism between the Hindus and Muslims became very acute in the new province. The Muslim leaders, now more conscious of their separate communal identity, directed their attention in uniting the different sections of their community to the creation of a counter movement against that of the Hindus. They keenly felt the need for unity and believed that the Hindu agitation against the Partition was in fact a communal movement and as such a threat to the Muslims as a separate community. They decided to faithfully follow the directions of leaders like Salimullah and Nawab Ali Chowdhury and formed organisations like the Mohammedan Provincial Union.

Though communalism had reached its peak in the new province by 1907, there is evidence of a sensible and sincere desire among some of the educated and upper class Muslims and Hindus to put an end to these religious antagonisms. A group of prominent members of both communities met the Viceroy Lord Minto on 15 March 1907 with suggestions to put an end to communal violence and promote religious harmony between the two communities.

The landlord-tenant relationship in the new province had deteriorated and took a communal turn. The Hindu landlords felt alarmed at the acts of terrorism committed by the anti-partition agitators. To prove their unswerving loyalty to the government and give evidence of their negative attitude towards the agitation, they offered their hands of friendship and co-operation to their Muslim counterparts to the effect that they would take a non-communal stand and work unitedly against the anti-government revolutionary movements. In the meantime the All-India Muslim League had come into being at Dacca on 30 December 1906. Though several factors were responsible for the formation of such an organisation, the Partition of Bengal and the threat to it was, perhaps, the most important factor that hastened its birth. At its very first sitting at Dacca the Muslim League, in one of its resolutions, said: 'That this meeting in view of the clear interest of the Muhammadans of Eastern Bengal consider that Partition is sure to prove beneficial to the Muhammadan community which constitute the vast majority of the populations of the new province and that all such methods of agitation such as boycotting should be strongly condemned and discouraged'.

To assuage the resentment of the assertive Bengali Hindus, the British government decided to annul the Partition of Bengal. As regards the Muslims of Eastern Bengal the government stated that in the new province the Muslims were in an overwhelming majority in point of population, under the new arrangement also they would still be in a position of approximate numerical equality or possibly of small superiority over the Hindus. The interests of the Muslims would be safeguarded by special representation in the Legislative Councils and the local bodies.

LORD HARDINGE succeeded Minto and on 25 August 1911. In a secret despatch the government of India recommended certain changes in the administration of India. According to the suggestion of the Governor-General-in-Council, King George V at his Coronation Darbar in Delhi in December 1911 announced the revocation of the Partition of Bengal and of certain changes in the administration of India. Firstly, the Government of India should have its seat at Delhi instead of Calcutta. By shifting the capital to the site of past Muslim glory, the British hoped to placate Bengal's Muslim community now aggrieved at the loss of provincial power and privilege in eastern Bengal. Secondly, the five Bengali speaking Divisions viz The Presidency, Burdwan, Dacca, Rajshahi and Chittagong were to be united and formed into a Presidency to be administered by a Governor-in-Council. The area of this province would be approximately 70,000 sq miles with a population of 42 million. Thirdly, a Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council with a Legislative Council was to govern the province comprising of

Bihar, Chhota Nagpur and Orissa. Fourthly, Assam was to revert back to the rule of a Chief Commissioner. The date chosen for the formal ending of the partition and reunification of Bengal was I April 1912.

Reunification of Bengal indeed served somewhat to soothe the feeling of the Bengalee Hindus, but the down grading of Calcutta from imperial to mere provincial status was simultaneously a blow to 'Bhadralok' egos and to Calcutta real estate values. To deprive Calcutta of its prime position as the nerve centre of political activity necessarily weakened the influence of the Bengalee Hindus. The government felt that the main advantage, which could be derived from the move, was that it would remove the seat of the government of India from the agitated atmosphere of Bengal.

Lord Carmichael, a man of liberal sympathies, was chosen as the first Governor of reunified Bengal. The Partition of Bengal and the agitation against it had far-reaching effects on Indian history and national life. The twin weapons of Swadeshi and Boycott adopted by the Bengalis became a creed with the Indian National Congress and were used more effectively in future conflicts. They formed the basis of Gandhi's Non-Cooperation, Satyagraha and Khadi movements. They also learned that organised political agitation and critical public opinion can force the government to accede to public demands.

The annulment of the partition as a result of the agitation against it had a negative effect on the Muslims. The majority of the Muslims did not like the Congress support to the anti-partition agitation. The politically conscious Muslims felt that the Congress had supported a Hindu agitation against the creation of a Muslim majority province. It reinforced their belief that their interests were not safe in the hands of the Congress. Thus they became more anxious to emphasise their separate communal identity and leaned towards the Muslim League to safeguard their interest against the dominance of the Hindu majority in undivided India. To placate Bengali Muslim feelings Lord Hardinge promised a new University at Dacca on 31 January 1912 to a Muslim deputation led by Salimullah. The Partition of Bengal of 1905 left a profound impact on the political history of India. From a political angle the

measure accentuated Hindu-Muslim differences in the region. One point of view is that by giving the Muslim's a separate territorial identity in 1905 and a communal electorate through the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 the British Government in a subtle manner tried to neutralise the possibility of major Muslim participation in the Indian National Congress.

The Partition of Bengal indeed marks a turning point in the history of nationalism in India. It may be said that it was out of the travails of Bengal that Indian nationalism was born. By the same token the agitation against the partition and the terrorism that it generated was one of the main factors which gave birth to Muslim nationalism and encouraged them to engage in separatist politics. The birth of the Muslim League in 1906 at Dacca (Dhaka) bears testimony to this. The annulment of the partition sorely disappointed not only the Bengali Muslims but also the Muslims of the whole of India. They felt that loyalty did not pay but agitation does. Thereafter, the dejected Muslims gradually took an anti-British stance.

THE CITY IN INDIAN POLITICS

South Asian historians have long recognized the significance of the port cities and presidency capitals of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta as sites for the beginnings of modern political processes in India. Only recently, however, have historians begun to provide, by detailed institutional analyses, the background necessary for understanding the development of Indian urban politics. In such studies, the municipal corporations of the larger urban centres have not received detailed attention. They have been referred to generally as examples of British-created institutions which, together with the provincial councils, the law courts and the universities, became arenas of opportunity and power for the Indian Westernized intelligentsia who entered them. They are seen providing in the nineteenth century the schools of political education for those who were later to supply the leadership of regional political parties and the nationalist movement. Municipal affairs have been examined most often for the data they provide on issues such as leadership recruitment, elite group or communal conflict, factionalism and patterns of political mobilization. Some

of these studies have relied on very partial municipal data such as election results, or communal voting patterns.

More recently studies have appeared which focus specifically on the municipal corporations as urban institutions per se, and which utilize a much wider variety of "micro-level" data. Kenneth Gillion, C.A. Bayley, John Leonard and others have examined the municipal affairs of places like Ahmedabad, Allahabad, and Rajamundry in the late nineteenth century for what they reveal of both urban history and networks of patronage and influence operative in urban affairs. Studies concerned with mapping the dimensions of local power groups now go beyond merely examining election contests or the membership of municipal councils to tap the evidence of the minutiae of municipal affairs: the distribution of municipal subsidies, the award of building permits, tax collection and assessment records, the selection of municipal employees, and so on. It is increasingly recognized that the early municipal councils, despite their narrow property franchises, their limited resources and restricted powers, are susceptible to the analytical techniques of contemporary political science.

Surprisingly, however, these techniques have not been applied to any large extent to the municipal corporations of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, which have the longest histories of electoral institutions and the most detailed municipal records. The corporations of the presidency capitals have been treated as secondary in regional, institutional or leadership analyses. Yet it is noteworthy that these corporations were perhaps the most vital political institutions of the late nineteenth century. Certainly they were larger, more representative and more open to Indian influence than the provincial councils which were dominated by officials and non-official nominees. When detailed studies of the presidency corporations are completed South Asian historians will be well on the way to having a clear picture of the nature and significance of municipal politics in nineteenth-century India.

The municipal studies which have appeared to date usually take the municipal constitutions and structures as given, and concentrate upon the dynamics of municipal politics. But the constitutional principles of those municipal bodies were by no

means settled, even late in the nineteenth century. Alternative structures had to be considered, often by men with little or no experience of urban government. Those who shaped the early municipal bodies were far more concerned with constitutional principles than one might think from studies which focus upon political dynamics. The functions of municipal councils, the structure of management, the definitions of councillors' roles, and the allocation of powers among levels of government were all matters for debate. These debates were heightened by an awareness that the experiments in municipal administration in the provincial capitals might provide the models for the future development of local government institutions in the lesser towns of India.

This paper aims to contribute to our understanding of the conflict of ideas about municipal structures during a formative period in Calcutta's institutional history (1875-1900). The focus is upon alternative models for municipal management rather than upon the dynamics of political behaviour in the municipal arena.

5

Issues in Municipal Constitution-making

Certainly, acrimonious controversy over the management of Calcutta city is not a recent phenomenon. The administration of the nineteenth-century imperial capital was early recognized as a particularly trying problem, but it was not until late in the century that multiple pressures began to create an atmosphere of tension and frustration in the Calcutta municipality. The physical impediments of the town's site had always taxed the ingenuity and resources of its inhabitants; now population growth, commercial expansion, bureaucratic proliferation and social diversification increased demands for municipal services at the same time that financial and policy considerations, at both imperial and provincial levels, necessitated decentralization of power and accommodation to the demands of interest groups for a role in local decision-making.

It was in such a context that the officials and ratepayers sought to construct the administrative apparatus which would guide the city's future development. Repeatedly, as they proceeded, the undercurrents of tension swelled to bitter confrontations over the municipal constitution. In these confrontations, the representatives of those groups with the greatest stake in the municipality-the Government of Bengal, the British commercial magnates who controlled Bengal's international trade, the local tradesmen and publicists, and the predominantly Hindu propertied and professional classes-made demands for power and status in the municipal system, attempting to shape the institution to their own economic and political needs.

Reviewing this history of conflict over a period of 25 years (1875-1900), one becomes aware that it was generated by more than the play of local interest groups for power: there were fundamental disagreements over basic issues in local government. Among these were: What purposes should a municipal corporation fulfil? How should it be structured to best achieve its goals? What are the most effective processes of decision-making within such an institution? What should be the role of municipal councillors (in Calcutta, called "commissioners") within the Corporation and in relation to the ratepayers? As Calcutta moved fitfully to answer these questions, two basic conceptions of the ultimate purposes of local government institutions emerged and ultimately clashed. These conceptions are familiar as tensions in Western political theory. In the nineteenth-century Indian context the opposition was between the themes of "administrative efficiency" and "political education": Should a local government institution be solely concerned with effective management of civic services, or should it provide a training ground for administrative/political experience, preparing citizens for the assumption of higher roles in larger political institutions?

Such issues were still matters of considerable debate in Britain, which had only very recently began to systematize a bewildering array of local government institutions, premised on a variety of constitutional principles. Thus the Calcutta debate became a local variant of a more general one being carried on vigorously by nineteenth-century British intellectuals and politicians about the function of representative institutions in the body politic. The Bengal officials, however, remained conscious of the great differences between, for instance, Calcutta and Liverpool. For at the back of all such debates in India towered the larger issue of whether Western representative institutions could be transplanted on to foreign, albeit colonial, soil.

In the mid-1870's the issues were by no means as clear-cut as they appear in retrospect. Only gradually did the themes of "efficiency" and "political education", and the contrasting models of municipal government premised on them, come into opposition. Initially it was assumed that the needs of efficiency and representation could be balanced within the municipal structure.

This is clear from an examination of the factors in the reform which gave Calcutta a largely ratepayer-elected municipal corporation in 1876.

THE 1876 MUNICIPAL ACT

From the early 1860's Calcutta's municipal affairs were managed by the Justices of the Peace for Bengal. The Justices were appointed by the lieutenant-governor of Bengal, on the theory that "all classes" of the community should be "suitably represented".8 In fact, the office was frequently bestowed as a personal honour without regard to the capacities or interests of the nominees. In the early 1870's there were over a hundred Justices consisting of Civilians, Anglo-Indian commercial men and tradesmen, and Hindu and Muslim notables.9 There were few Bengali lawyers, publicists or teachers among the Justices, and none were representative of the younger generation of Western-educated professional men in Calcutta. Only a handful of the Justices took a regular part in municipal administration.

The Justices' duties were few and the municipal structure elementary. The municipal chairman was a high-ranking Bengal Civilian who also served as commissioner of police. His executive powers in relation to the Justices were loosely defined and the Bengal Government possessed no right of intervention or constraint should the Justices prove grossly negligent. The system worked smoothly if the municipal executive and the Justices were in agreement on issues of municipal policy. After the late 1860's, however, such agreement was rare, for the active Justices-a coalition of Hindu property owners and European tradesmen and publicists-united in opposing what they considered to be extravagance in municipal spending. They were able to block in the committees (which they dominated in the absence of other representatives) any schemes which would entail increased expenditure and consequent raises in the house rates or licence taxes. The chairman, for his part, sometimes had to rely on packing the quarterly meetings with inactive, government-supporting Justices in order to pass the budget or improvement of schemes.

Complaints about the municipal system came from many sources. The active "independent" Justices railed against the "high-

handedness" of the municipal chairman;10 property owners complained of excessive taxation;11 members of the commercial elite, who rarely accepted municipal office or attended debates, levelled charges of inefficiency against the Justices;12 and, gradually, a newly emergent group in urban life began to resent their exclusion from the city's administrative institutions. These were the men who were later to form the vanguard of the nationalist movement in Bengal, those who in 1875 and 1876, initiated the Indian League and the Indian Association: the lawyers, teachers, journalists and public servants who were often referred to as "the new middle class". When a measure of election was granted to the Bombay City Corporation in 1872, these men began to demand a similar reform for Calcutta.

However, the party most dissatisfied with the municipal system was the Government of Bengal. Sir George Campbell, Lieutenant-Governor from 1871-1874, believed that the Justices possessed too much "spurious independence" and that the municipal structure was not "efficient for executive work". The Government of Bengal, he noted, lacked the power to intervene effectively in municipal affairs and thus was "no longer really responsible for the great and weighty matters affecting the metropolis of India"

Campbell was clearly concerned about efficient municipal administration, but there was an equally strong participatory emphasis in his arguments. Like many Indian Civil Service (ICS) officials of the liberal-paternalist stamp in the mid-nineteenth century, Campbell firmly believed that it was incumbent upon the British to develop in educated Indians the "capacity for self-government." In 1874, he forecast a time when the grandchildren of his generation of Indian subjects would see "a Bengalee House of Commons" evolve out of local government organs such as the Calcutta Corporation. Campbell believed that the constitution should be reformed to make it more representative of the middle class, who seemed anxious to enter the "schools of political capacity" which the British spoke of developing.

It fell to Campbell's successor, Sir Richard Temple, actually to initiate the municipal reform. Very different in some respects, the two men shared the same principles of local government

reform. Temple endorsed Campbell's concern for administrative efficiency. He had served as financial member of the Governor-General's Council from 1868 to 1874 and had been instrumental in shaping Lord Mayo's measures of financial devolution to relieve the central government's finances. He was thus convinced of the need to devise means of teaching the people to take "a practical share in provincial finance". Temple hoped that if Indians were made more responsible for local government they would see the necessity for local taxation. Both Temple and Campbell realized that Calcutta's strong-willed zamindars would not readily accept local taxation; both lieutenant-governors reasoned that if the municipal body was diluted with an infusion of educated, but less wealthy Bengalis, the Corporation would prove more co-operative in matters of local improvements. Moreover, Temple feared that unless institutional opportunities were quickly provided for "the educated middle class", they would soon become discontented and impatient critics of the government.

But, like Campbell, Temple's arguments were not solely pragmatic. He believed that the younger generation of professional men were entitled to representation on the Corporation because they constituted a legitimate interest in the city. Furthermore, he was confident of the moral power which the exercise of a franchise could have upon "politically uneducated" minds. Participation in an electoral process would "discipline the intellect" and "form the character" of the Bengali middle class. In the process of being thus educated they would gain sympathetic insight into the difficulties faced by the British in administering local affairs.

In discussing the reform of the Calcutta municipality, Temple and Campbell thus revealed some major concerns of British Indian administrators at this time. They saw only good, no danger, in the construction of British-style local self-government institutions in the colonies. There was to them no irreconcilable conflict between the principles of efficiency and political education in local government. Any temporary inefficiency created in the devolution of power from an autocratic bureaucracy to elected representative institutions would ultimately be offset by the greater efficiency and smoother working which would be possible in popularly accepted administrative bodies. Their comments were imbued

with what W.J.M. Mackenzie has termed an "ethical commitment" to a general concept of local government. This commitment made a deep impression upon the generation of politically-oriented Indians who gained their first opportunities for public office as a result. There was thus a strong feeling of moral outrage in their reaction later when it seemed that the British administration was abandoning its earlier principles.

Had Sir Richard Temple been able to set aside the existing municipal institutions, erase the patterns of management which had already made their mark upon the city, and shape the new municipal constitution to his will, it is possible that he would have found a way of embodying these varied principles in an effective municipal organization. As it was, the Government of Bengal found itself juggling the imcompatible demands of a variety of local interest groups. Conservative Anglo-Indians and some Hindu and Muslim notables opposed the principle of election; other Anglo-Indians demanded a large, fixed proportion of council seats; the former "independent" Justices were outraged at the sweeping powers of intervention which the Government of Bengal claimed in the new constitution, while members of the Indian League (a new organization claiming to represent the "middle class") agitated for elective representation on a low ratepaying franchise.

The final act was a compromise fashioned to reconcile these extreme views. The motives of the reform had been mixed; the new constitution was shot through with ambiguities. Moreover, the changes were grafted on the remnants of the old constitution. Repeated amendments were necessary over the years to keep the act operative.

The constitution provided for the election on a high ratepaying franchise of 48 out of 72 commissioners to represent 18 municipal wards. The remaining commissioners were nominated by the lieutenant-governor. The chairman continued to be an appointed Bengal official. The powers of the body of commissioners were more restricted than those of the Justices. In particular, a controversial control clause allowed the provincial government to institute an inquiry into the Corporation in cases of alleged neglect. The areas of responsibility of the Corporation were enlarged but no substantial change was made in the financial resources of the

municipality: the basic sources of revenue continued to be direct property taxes. While the new commissioners were subject to superordinate sanctions, they constituted the "supreme authority" in the municipality. The constitution allowed for the creation of standing and special committees which would control policy-making and supervise the work of the executive. These committees possessed considerable potential for interfering with the executive. This possibility was enhanced by the fact that the areas of jurisdiction of the executive, committees, and body of commissioners were not clearly demarcated. Overriding control by officials meant, however, that the committees' power was finally only the power to debate and to oppose.

At least in its "political education" ideals, the Calcutta Act of 1876 fulfilled the intentions of its framers. It opened the Corporation to representatives of the professional classes. Of the 48 commissioners returned in the first election, 43 were new to municipal work. Seventeen of these were Bengali Hindu lawyers; others were teachers and journalists-men like Ananda Mohan Bose and Surendranath Banerjea. The representatives of this class eagerly contested municipal elections, while, in the early years, the Anglo-Indians and Muslims held aloof. The Hindus were also more diligent than others in attending municipal meetings; they dominated the committees and increased their working power within the Corporation. The elective system thus became identified with the Hindu bhadralok of Calcutta, who developed a proprietary attitude towards the municipal constitution. They came to regard it as an almost sacred charter of civic freedom to be defended against the criticisms of Anglo-Indian citizens and ICS officers. As Sir Henry Harrison, chairman of the Corporation between 1882 and 1891, noted: "They have felt that success meant success of an experiment in administration by Natives, and failure-their failure."

The most vociferous critics of the new system were Anglo-Indian citizens whose refusal to co-operate with the elective system enabled the Hindus to dominate the elected seats in the Corporation. But their attacks were frequently unsubstantiated and irresponsible. More significant for the development of local government in Bengal was that even while the imperial government was attempting to extend the principles of the Calcutta system to rural areas, lieutenant-governors in Bengal were enunciating quite different conceptions of the nature and function of local government institutions.

ELITE AND ARENA COUNCILS

At the root of these differing conceptions of local government lay a distinction commonly encountered in political theory. For our purposes it has been stated most pertinently by F.G. Bailey in discussing the process of decision-making in councils and committees. Bailey draws a distinction between "elite" and "arena" councils:

Elite councils are those which are, or consider themselves to be (whether they admit it openly or not), a ruling oligarchy. The dominant cleavage in such a group is between the elite council... and the public: that is to say, the dominant cleavage is horizontal. The opposite kind of council is the arena council. These exist in groups in which the dominant cleavages are vertical. The council is not so much a corporate body with interests against its public, but an arena in which the representatives of segments in the public come into conflict with one another.

Elite councillors tend to prefer consensual decisions made in the name of the "common good"; arena councillors do not suppress differences of opinion, but air them as representatives of distinct interests, and tend to reach decisions by divisions and votes.

Although Bailey suggests that there is a structural difference in the contest from which elite and arena councils are recruited, the distinction between the two councils does not rest upon a necessary difference in the composition or structure of the councils themselves. Thus both councils which can be characterized as "elite" and those which can be characterized as "arena' may be composed of representatives of a wider public. The important distinctions are really in how the councillors conceive their roles, how they act towards their public, and how they reach decisions in policy-making.

Elite councillors subordinate their representativeness to the corporate identity of the council. They are expected to set aside vested interests in order to reach the most rational or fair decisions on issues before them. Arena councillors see their roles as

representatives as primary. The process of decision-making in arena councils is the give and take of weighing often conflicting interests against each other. One might add that elite councillors tend to be oriented towards superordinate bureaucratic structures, while arena councillors orient themselves primarily towards the electorate.

The differing views of how the Calcutta Corporation should have operated may be interpreted in terms of the distinction between "elite" and "arena" councils, as the following analysis of the actions of the Hindu commissioners and the criticisms made of them by the Government of Bengal demonstrates.

THE BENGALI NATIONALISTS' MODEL

The Hindu elected commissioners took their roles as elected representatives seriously. In their relationship to the municipal electorate, they saw themselves as political modernizers with the task of establishing in Calcutta patterns of local organization which they assumed were standard in British municipalities. Ratepayers' associations and ward committees were set up in the northern Calcutta wards. Under the guidance of the Indian Association, these played a role as grievance groups and electoral bodies, nominating candidates for election, registering voters, and bringing out the vote at election time. The members of such committees were usually supporters of the Indian Association and the Indian National Congress. In the 1890's Surendranath Banerjea called upon local Congress members to work in the Calcutta wards and to convert the ratepayers' committees into "the primary centres of Congress organization". The Hindu press avidly discussed municipal matters and highlighted policy issues at election times, although electoral contests themselves were usually based on factional, rather than policy, alignments.

Indeed, the Hindu elected commissioners were not divided by large policy issues. Contrary to the assumptions of Temple and Campbell, these men did not prove to be any less sensitive to vested interests than the large property owners who had dominated the old corporation. The new men mostly owned their own homes in Calcutta, and their constituents were, by necessity of the franchise, mostly houseowners. The elected commissioners, like the older Hindu Justices, strongly resisted increases in the house rates. Similarly they questioned all items of municipal expenditure and thoroughly debated the budget. They also continued the established tradition of keeping a close watch on the municipal executive, while attempting to increase the power of the body of commissioners vis-a-vis the executive. For instance, they demanded the right to elect the municipal chairman and pressed for enlargement of the elected section of the Corporation and reduction of the number of nominated commissioners.

The Bengali commissioners took the Calcutta Corporation to be literally a "nursery of political education" and a stepping-stone on the path to participation in all-India politics. Those commissioners who already saw themselves as nationalists at times deliberately introduced national issues into municipal debates, or attempted to use the Corporation as a pressure group for action on wider issues. In 1893 and 1894, for instance, Surendranath Banerjea put forward a motion for the Corporation to withhold its traditional farewell address to a departing viceroy in protest against the "reactionary trend" in British imperial policy. On other occasions, attempts were made to read into the municipal proceedings resolutions relating to non-municipal matters. Such tactics were consciously derived from the Irish nationalists of the 1840's, who had laid the foundations of the Repeal Movement by activating municipal corporations in Ireland.

These actions politicized the procedures of the Corporation, yet they were legitimate in terms of the Hindu nationalists' interpretation of the ultimate goal of the local government bodies being developed by the British. Relying on the pronouncements of liberal administrators and viceroys, the nationalists believed that local government bodies were the bases on which a structure of national representative government would be built. For educated Indians they were to be the means to higher public office. They were to provide them with training in the skills of politics and administration. So, when criticized for raising "political" issues in the Calcutta Corporation, Surendranath Banerjea argued:

We are certainly not a political body in the sense in which the expression is ordinarily used. But there is one aspect of the question which appears to be ignored. Municipal institutions are the germs

of all political institutions. Municipal life is the basis of public life. Municipal self-government precedes national self-government.

The Bengali commissioners further thought of the Calcutta Corporation as an arena where representatives of different interests in the city would confront each other over issues of municipal policy. They did not, however, favour structuring the Corporation to achieve a contrived representation of interests. They believed that minority groups would be adequately represented if they contested elections based on territorial wards. They looked forward to the time when the Calcutta Corporation would become a large, fully elected body, possessing all the rights of the most progressive of British municipal councils.

On these grounds, the active Hindu commissioners defended their record in the Calcutta Corporation. They believed they had made the municipal administration more popular, and thus more effective, than it had been before. Any laxness or inefficiency in the system, they argued, was rather the result of executive bungling or financial constraints than an outcome of the elective system or of their role in the municipal corporation.

In terms of their assumptions, the Hindu elected commissioners were model municipal councillors. Their electioneering tactics, their budget and policy debates, their protection of their constituents' interests, and their resistance to arbitrary executive actions and provincial and central governmental interference in local matters, were all legitimate in the eyes of many Victorian statesmen. A handful of liberal civilians at the imperial and provincial level-men like Lord Ripon, or Sir Henry Harrison, H.J. Reynolds, and Henry Cotton in Bengal-reinforced the Indian nationalists' convictions by reiterating the "political education" theme in local government. Henry Cotton, for instance, defending the record of the Hindu commissioners when they were accused of neglecting sanitation, wrote:

It is possible the municipal work of this city might be more efficiently administered under the ideally perfect control of a benevolent despotism. Be that as it may, the policy of the Government is now cast in another mould. We have another object in view-the education and training of the people-and for this end we are content to put up with many failures in practical

administration. Over the years, committees proliferated, municipal meetings became more frequent and lengthy as issues were elaborately debated. Decisions were often arrived at by division, but the balance in the Corporation between the nationalist commissioners, who regarded themselves as the "Opposition", and the collection of nominated commissioners, Anglo-Indian ward representatives, Muslims and "loyal" Hindus, frequently resulted in deadlock and consequent inaction in matters such as water supply and road extension.

THE CONSERVATIVE CIVILIANS' MODEL

Unfortunately for the harmony of municipal affairs in Calcutta, the majority of Bengal Civilians in the later nineteenth century had little sympathy for the political education ideal, especially when applied to the Calcutta Corporation. They operated with a different model for a local council in mind-one which emphasized the need for efficient administration and approximated the concept of an "elite council". Stressing that the management of the capital of the British empire in India was more than a local or amateur concern, they preferred to see a council composed of a select group of men, hand-picked to achieve a balance among the major interests in the municipality.

Such councillors would not be content with reflecting the, usually unenlightened, views of the Calcutta ratepayers; rather, they would guide Indians towards British standards of cleanliness and efficiency. In accord on major policy issues, the municipal councillors would work together for the good of the city, reaching decisions in a business-like manner with a minimum of conflict and debate. Important policy decisions, large administrative questions, and executive details would be left to the experts best qualified to deal with them. The body of commissioners would content themselves with general financial and administrative control. "Party" or factional politics would play no role in the election of commissioners or the selection of committee members: the aim would be to select "good men", possessed of business knowledge or suitable expertise in urban management. The guiding principles of such a body would be administrative efficiency; it would give Calcutta pure water, adequate sanitation, wider roads,

and better buildings. This model emerges from the persistent criticisms of the 1876 Act and "those who came to power through its instrumentality" (that is, the Hindu commissioners whom the Civilians sometimes referred to as "the Baboo party"). Even at the time of the reform, a number of Civilians objected to Temple's decision to introduce an elective system. They considered it premature and totally unsuitable for a vital administrative capital and commercial centre with a diverse and largely uneducated population. In the following decades successive lieutenant-governors denounced the liberal principles espoused by Lord Ripon as doctrinaire and Utopian. They sincerely doubted that western representative institutions could be successfully transferred to India. Since they rejected as unthinkable the ultimate goal of a self-governing India equipped with British political institutions, they could hardly agree that local administrative bodies should be experimental parliamentary institutions, educating Indians for future parliamentary roles.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who as lieutenant-governor from 1895-1899 was to initiate a crackdown on the Calcutta Corporation, complained in 1882 that: "Men talk, and newspapers write, as if India was all the same as Middlesex. They babble about the separation of executive and judicial functions, about local self-government and representation and the like...." These "shibboleths of so-called progress," he warned, might prove to be "mischievous when they cease to be only meaningless." It was incredible to him that Calcutta should be managed by a system which had been "borrowed en bloc from the most advanced models in England, and without any reference to the utterly different circumstances of an Oriental city and a very mixed community."

Mackenzie, Sir Rivers Thompson, Sir Ashley Eden, Sir Stuart Bailey, and others were critical of the record of the Calcutta Corporation. They accused the commissioners of being inefficient, over-talkative, and even corrupt. The Corporation, they asserted, was "choked" by unnecessary committees and devoid of executive power. All these faults were laid at the door of the elective system. Reporting to Lord Ripon on the working of elective systems in Bengal in 1881, Sir Rivers Thompson complained that the Calcutta elections had driven "men of substance" from the municipal

corporation, bringing in "ambitious young men whose chief aim is to bring themselves before the public, and acquire notoriety as speakers, much to the detriment of real business." Over ten years later, Herbert Risley, then Secretary to the Government of Bengal, echoed this criticism, adding that the elected commissioners were not really representative of most Indians. The elective system, he said, was a faulty and superficial method:

It leaves the elder generation and those who follow in their steps out in the cold, and Government has to bring them in by way of nomination. It selects those who rise to the surface-the men who talk and canvass and agitate-but it does not reach the silent depths of the stream. It does not give us, as a rule, either here or in the muffassal, the genuine, representative Hindus, the men we really want.

Such Civilians disliked and distrusted the new generation of educated Bengali Hindus. They regarded them as superficial, unpractical, self-seeking and manipulative. In fact, their image of the Bengali educated commissioners corresponds closely to the picture of the political type whom some had predicted would emerge in Britain with the advance of "popular government": the wire-puller who, gathering together fragments of political power, and fanning the flames of party spirit, would manipulate an ignorant public through corruption, intrigue and the techniques of the professional agitator.50 In the hands of such men, they argued, the insidious liberal doctrine of political education had proven disastrous for Calcutta.

When Sir Alexander Mackenzie, taking advantage of a plague scare in Calcutta in 1897, moved to restrict the power of the nationalists in the Corporation, he gave full vent to his feelings about the "baboo" concept of the Corporation. In the Calcutta Corporation, he remarked, there was "far too much speaking for the sake of speech," "the commissioners interfered with the municipal executive," "work was done twice or thrice over," and the commissioners paid too much deference to the "wishes and objections of special interests." The elective commissioners had made municipal business "a profession in life" and through wire-pulling and intrigue had developed "party spirit" within the Corporation.

Against this, Mackenzie set the example of the Birmingham Council which he knew and admired. That council, he maintained, was "composed entirely of shrewd, capable men of business... whose one object is to treat every question before them, not as an opportunity for speech-making, but as a matter to be settled promptly and in the most practical way." The Birmingham councillors shared agreement on the general lines of municipal policy. They placed on each committee only the men who "knew most of the particular subject entrusted to it". The body of commissioners did not constantly interfere with the committees and executive: the general object was to strengthen and support the executive and have the work of the town done, and not merely talked about. "There is," he noted with satisfaction, "only one lawyer and one newspaperman on the whole council."

Mackenzie failed to note that Birmingham was in many ways exceptional among British municipalities. Ironically, also, he overlooked the fact that Joseph Chamberlain had transformed the Birmingham Corporation in the 1860's and 1870's in the belief that it should become "a real local parliament"-the very concept that was anathema to Mackenzie. In fact, Birmingham was not free of the "political" characteristics which Mackenzie condemned in Calcutta. All too frequently, the critics of liberal local government policy in India measured the developing Indian institutions against an ideal rarely found in actuality in Britain.

From these criticisms of the Calcutta Corporation, it is obvious that the conservative Civilians did not believe that the ends of efficiency and political education could be served within the one institution. They left no doubt as to which object should take precedence. "What we want," Lord Elgin told the Calcutta commissioners in 1894, "is the most efficient government attainable," while Sir Alexander Mackenzie attacked the "demoralizing doctrine that practical considerations are to be subordinated to the supposed educational influences of local self-government."

And how would efficient municipal management be obtained? In the final analysis, the conservatives' answer was to get the "right sort of men" as municipal commissioners. To the late Victorian bureaucrats, the "best men" were not the country

gentlemen of a former generation, but the type of man who had engineered Britain's commercial and industrial revolution: the businessman. "Business" was an almost magical word to them. In reforming the Calcutta Corporation in 1899 the Government of Bengal argued:

It is our object to place the municipal affairs of the town on a business footing; to carry on the business of the town in a businesslike manner with the active assistance of businessmen-and to do this we must adopt the methods of businessmen.

Yet the conservatives knew perfectly well that the businessmen of the city had shown no inclination to become involved in the unprofitable and time-consuming tasks of municipal administration.

FURTHER REFORM

It was not until the end of the century that these contrasting models were set in opposition, but they can be traced to many disagreements and misunderstandings in municipal proceedings over 25 years. One example is the lengthy debate between 1885 and 1888 on the amalgamation of urbanized portions of the suburbs with the old town of Calcutta. From mid-century, suburban growth had been rapid, but the suburbs remained far behind the old town in terms of water supply, sanitation and conservancy. In 1884, a sanitary commission argued that disease could never be controlled in the old town while these conditions persisted, since thousands of workers commuted from the suburban areas to the centre daily. It was proposed to bring the more urban of the fringe areas under an enlarged Calcutta administration. The sanitary commissioners' arguments were sound, and the government of Bengal, while establishing an amalgamation committee to consider the issue, immediately determined upon amalgamation. They hoped, too, to effect changes in the internal structure of the Corporation, reducing the number of ratepayers' representatives, trimming the committee structure and giving reserved seats to representatives of Anglo-Indian trade and commerce.

However amalgamation would obviously be costly for ratepayers of both the old town and the fringe areas. The rates in the added areas would be immediately doubled, while the

municipality's resources would be overtaxed by the necessity of providing new services to the added areas. (The Government of Bengal had offered no new financial resources to the enlarged municipality.) Acting in the interest of the ratepayers, the Bengali commissioners, backed by the Indian Association, mounted a strong campaign in opposition to the amalgamation and the municipal amendment, which they rightly feared would interfere with the municipal constitution. At the same time, within the Corporation and the Bengal Legislative Council, the "opposition" commissioners pressed for liberalization of the municipal constitution by enlargement of the elective element and expansion of the powers of the commissioners.

This placed them in the anomalous position of being constitutional radicals and policy conservatives. On the latter count they were condemned by conservative and liberal Civilians alike: the protection of immediate ratepayer interests was too blatantly in opposition to the long-term needs of the city. The reform went through, in spite of the opposition. It was no consolation that many of the nationalists' predictions proved correct: the Corporation was almost crippled by its new responsibilities, while the Anglo-Indian commercial men and tradesmen who were given reserved seats on the new Corporation became so irregular in attendance that they exerted no influence, salutary or otherwise, upon municipal policy.

In 1899 the Government of Bengal, and later the viceroy, Lord Curzon, moved again to shape the Calcutta constitution towards their preferred model of municipal administration.59 The number of ratepayers' representatives on the Corporation was halved. The committee structure was again redesigned in an attempt to give a predominant voice to Europeans and greater representation to commercial interests. The Corporation was brought under closer governmental control.

Radical though this reform was, the structural principles of the municipal constitution remained the same. However, the implication of the reform was that the commissioners were to act in the future like "elitist" councillors, responding to goals defined by the British administration rather than to the demands of ratepayers. Rather than conform to this image, many of the Bengali

nationalist commissioners withdrew from municipal affairs. Surendra-nath Banerjea, for instance, boycotted the Calcutta Corporation until, nearly 25 years later, he became Minister of Local Government in the Bengal Legislative Council. Then one of his first moves was an attempt to reshape the municipal constitution in terms of his earlier ideals-an act which ushered in a phase of intensive politicization of the Calcutta Corporation.

CONCLUSION

The issue of whether Western political institutions are appropriate for developing Asian countries is still debated by scholars of public administration. The experience of cities such as Calcutta provides no easy lessons or generalizable conclusions. Indeed, in Calcutta there were no agreed upon criteria for judging the "experiment" in Western representative municipal government. From the beginnings of the elective system its proponents steadfastly maintained that it had been a success: that it had made civic government more open and responsive to the needs of all Calcutta's citizens rather than simply serving the needs of the European sector.

The Bengali commissioners maintained, too, that the system was never given a fair trial but that it was restricted by constant governmental interference and by the lack of support for its principles by the Anglo-Indian elite. On the other hand, critics of the system could always point to some inefficiency or instance of lack of progress to support their arguments that the experiment had totally failed.

The origins of the nineteenth-century Calcutta controversy lie in fundamental ambiguities in the political theory on which the original reform was premised. Political theorists, in particular, John Stuart Mill, had written about ideal representative institutions in which, it was assumed, a balance could be achieved between the needs of effective administration and responsiveness to the public will. But Mill had never specified the components of the balance. Who was to say, in the Calcutta context, when the needs of political education (and the "arena" politics which developed in satisfying them) must be overruled by the requirements of efficiency (more readily achieved through the "elite") ?

Such questions may be asked, of course, of representative institutions in any country. In India the debate was complicated by the knowledge that these institutions were expected to function in an environment different from their original one. To those British administrators who were still strongly influenced by utilitarianism and liberalism, these environmental differences were immaterial, since they assumed that the processes of both political education and urbanization would differ little in Britain and India. Such men quite naturally drew upon current theories of local government, many of whose tenets had been developed by administrators or intellectuals with direct experience of India's imperial system. The acceptance of theoretical and practical interchange between British and Indian political-administrative systems underscores their assumption that institutional transference from England to India was feasible and appropriate.

Bengali intellectuals, educated in Western political theory, had no difficulty accepting these assumptions. Their adaptation, if it can be so called, lay in emphasizing the political educational aspects of British local government theory almost to the exclusion of administrative concerns. They believed that any differences between Victorian England and colonial India which might impede the transplantation of British institutions to India could readily be overcome through the medium of political education.

The conservative Civilians who opposed the liberal and Bengali conceptions also drew upon theorists such as John Stuart Mill, but they chose to emphasize the concern for efficient administration in Mill's ideal system. These Civilians, more than any others of those concerned, explicitly raised the issue of whether large, representative, Western institutions were appropriate for developing Indian towns. However they raised this issue for reasons rather different from those of modern political scientists. Many conservative Civilians were convinced that the pace of political reform was proceeding too fast in Britain and that representative institutions would ultimately fail even there. In India at least they could oppose the implantation of faulty methods of government.

In the final analysis, however, the conservatives lacked the courage or initiative to radically alter the lines of local political

development in India. When the opportunity arose to remodel the Calcutta Corporation, for instance, they had no practicable alternative to impose. Hence they merely tinkered with the details of the constitution, leaving the basic structure with its mixed principles intact.

The clash of models of local council structures has persisted almost uninterrupted for a hundred years. The traditions of arena and elitist politics can be traced throughout the twentieth-century history of the Corporation. Both traditions have at times contributed to irresponsibility rather than to efficiency and accountability in municipal administration. Disagreements over the appropriate model for a city such as Calcutta continue to mark city and Bengal government debates today.

The Calcutta conflict has been experienced by other Indian cities, as essays in the present collection indicate. The tension between democracy (the modern equivalent of "political education") and administrative efficiency in Indian local government has frequently resulted neither in popular control nor in improved administration. Politicians and scholars have yet to suggest a truly effective model for the management of rapidly growing, ethnically complex, and financially constrained Asian cities.

6

The Liberal Tradition in India

The Liberal tradition in India which has had a continuous history since the nineteenth century, played an important role in the shaping of a modern consciousness, and instilling social and political ideas that were not indigenous to India. It ensured their becoming part of political and social discourse and did many other things of very great value; like for instance, founding educational institutions, running newspapers and journals, initiating the forming of associations in cities and towns, interacting with the British government on behalf of the people of India and championing the cause of the underdog. But for the work of India's liberals, the British rulers would have remained in ignorance about the conditions of the people. These are only some of the very many things that they engaged in.

AN IMPRESSIVE ROLL CALL OF NAMES

To recall the names of the liberals is a roll call of the greatest names of modern India going back to the 1820s. They worked in the capitals and important cities of the provinces in British India and it is a fact of significance that the emergence of the Liberals in India is due to the contact of western and native civilizations. Indian liberals had their counterparts at about the same time in other countries like China, Japan and Turkey as well, also because of the contact with the West. It was part of a new awakening.

Western Influence, Yet Very Much Indian

India's early liberals could be called westerners for they were deeply influenced by western reasoning, science, social and political

institutions. Yet, with the exception of a few, they were also rooted in Indian culture and they believed in the abiding values of Indian traditions. Though we now call them liberals, in their own time from the 1820s they were not called liberals. They began to be called liberals in the 1890s mainly to distinguish them from nationalist extremists like Lokamanya Tilak and Aurobindo Ghosh. The description was used again from the 1920s to distinguish them from the Indian National Congress when they formed a Liberal Party.

Sovereignty of Public Opinion

One of the important principles of British liberalism was the sovereignty of public opinion. The belief was that the government should respond to public opinion and not be indifferent to it. In fact in the first half of the nineteenth century, organized public opinion was vociferous in demanding several concessions from the government, resulting in several important pieces of legislation-such as the abolition of slavery in the British colonies, the Reform Act of 1832 with which begins the movement for parliamentary democracy. As, in India then, the government was not democratic, the people wanted the government to be responsive to demands made upon it. The leaders of public opinion in India as well as in England seized upon the importance of organized public opinion, presenting them in a rational acceptable manner and pressurizing the government to respond to their petitions and demonstrations.

One needed associations for organizing public opinion and numerous associations were floated in different parts of the country-the Bombay Presidency Association, the Madras Native Association, the Sarvajanik Sabha. These associations essentially were organized for the redressal of grievances, organize information relating to particular grievances, present them in a convincing manner to the authorities and pressurize them for redressal. This method was adopted throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

These grievances were openly expressed and a new principle in our political system was made popular. During earlier regimes, demands made upon the sovereign were made in a closed system;

the king had to be appealed to and much depended upon those who were close to the centres of political power. More often than not, the demands made might not be heard at all or responded to. By contrast, these demands and grievances were aired in public under the full glare of publicity. They had to be transparent; the demands had to pass public scrutiny and be acceptable to the larger public. The field was open to anyone to make these demands and none was excluded in availing himself of it. It should be remembered that dalits too began to make demands for redressal of many of their social inequities.

GOVERNMENT AS AN ACCEPTABLE INSTITUTION

Central to this whole approach was the presumption of the right to liberty of opinion, expression and the right to mobilize public opinion in a peaceful manner. This is fundamental to liberalism. This is essentially a lawyer's view and many of the liberals were also lawyers. A lawyer presumes the legitimacy of the government and he works within the confines of the law. There was an acceptance of government and no suspicion that it would ride roughshod over the rights of citizens. Government was considered to be one that was conducted according to laws, not to caprice or whims, as were earlier governments in India. According to the liberals, the actions of governments were predictable; it could not be arbitrary, whimsical and carnal. It is these that made government an acceptable institution.

Politically, their task was clear-cut and within the limits they had set for themselves. They succeeded admirably. With regard to social problems their task was formidable. Politically they educated the public in new values; they attempted to modernize society. Not easy taks. Agarkar, a prominent liberal in Maharashtra, was to put it well-freedom is the easiest of things to win but social freedoms are the most difficult to achieve and to sustain. This was a daunting task which tried the might and resources of entire generations. One cannot say that all their efforts have succeeded.

MODERNIZING INDIAN SOCIETY

The task of modernizing society began with Ram Mohun Roy. Single-handedly and against great odds he instilled a sense

confidence among the Hindus and sought to elevate a community sunk in ignorance and wallowing in superstition and ignorance. He demonstrated his belief that the tenets of Christianity as well as of advanced evolved religions, were to be found in the Hindu scriptures. Hinduism could reinvent itself and shed its shibboleths and obscurantist practices. With him began the Brahmo Samaj movement which spread to Maharashtra, Andhra, Sind and Punjab and leaven the soil for reform. His political values were in advance of his times and he was enthused by the Enlightenment agenda of liberty and equality. He strived successfully for the elevation of women by championing the abolition of sutee, and the education of girls and women. He championed the cause of India's peasants in the British Parliament. In fact he was the quintessential liberal. He remained an ideal for all later philosophers of liberalism no less than for new generations of Indians and summed up in his life the aspirations of the new, reawakened India.

LIBERALS WELL-KNOWN AND NOT-SO-WELL-KNOWN

Ram Mohun Roy was the first modern Indian who was to influence not only Bengal but the entire country. Some of the other liberals were to reach an all India audience; some remained known in the region where they labored. Ishwara Chandra Vidyasagar's work was mainly in Bengal and he wrote in Bengali but his great accomplishment was to inspire every educated Indian. Surendranath Bannerjea became an all India figure as did Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Ranade, Gokhale and G. Subramaniam Iyer. There were equally important liberal stalwarts whose superhuman endeavour was restricted to their region and in the regional language. Lokhitawadi and G. G. Agarkar in Maharashtra, Veerasalingam Pantulu in Andhra, Phule in Maharashtra, D. V. Gundappa in Mysore, Dr. Ambedkar who came late on the scene. Both Phule and Ambedkar championed the cause of the depressed and their methods were essentially liberal-educate, organize, agitate and try continually to drum your message to a public which will be compelled to wake up and take note of your demands. Unfortunately these regional stalwarts who are no less important for regenerating the country are yet be known widely outside their region.

SOCIAL REFORMS

The abolition of sutee is too well known to need recapitulation. The liberals tried to raise the status of women by insisting upon their right to education, to prevent child marriages, to legislate the validity of widow marriages. Each was a long battle, tough and bitterly fought. Of these the most successful was the battle for the education of girls. A very important plank in the liberal programme was the battle for social reform-the right to cross the seas, loosening of caste bonds, raising the age of marriage. In almost all these they battled valiantly.

The issues that were initially taken up by the liberals became part of the nationalist programme and almost all their key programmes become nationally acceptable by the 'thirties and 'forties.

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION

The battle for constitutionalism was one in which the liberals did not see eye to eye with the nationalists and the liberals were generally tended to be reviled. The liberal held the view that British association was on the whole beneficial inspite of the economic exploitation. They were convinced that the empire would soon be a thing of the past and in the interval the long term benefits should be taken advantage of, viz. rule of law, constitutional development, education of the people in political values, local government, participatory politics, general education and gradualism. Too rapid a change would not be in the long term benefits of the people. Political training is time-consuming and its fruits are not visible immediately. Nation building is a long term engagement and there are no short cuts to development, both economic and political. The life blood of a nation are its institutions and the liberals built this up patiently-The Deccan Education Society, The Indian Association, The Deccan Sabha, the Sarvajanik Sabha, the Mahajana Sabha, the Bombay Presidency Association, and the Servants of India Society.

STRESS ON EDUCATION

They laid great stress on education-both formal and public education. It is interesting to note that almost every liberal of note

was a teacher at some stage in their lives. For a very brief period, Ranade was a college teacher; Dadabhai had a longer innings as professor of mathematics. Surendranath Banerjea founded the Ripon College and was proud of his students. Gokhale served long as teacher, so did Agarkar. G. Subramania Iyer was teacher who founded and managed schools and Veerasalingam was a pandit all his life and his students were great enthusiasts.

TEACHERS PAR EXCELLENCE

They were also teachers par excellence of the public. The most famous of them was Surendranath Bannerjea who stomped around North India lecturing on the development of nationalist ideas and the great work of Joseph Mazzini, the Italian nationalist. Single-handedly he made the concept of nationalism popular and educated a whole generation. His autobiography is appropriately called A Nation in the Making. Similarly, Dadabhai Naoroji drew public attention to the draining of India's wealth because of British rule (which he called Un-British) and raised the question of the poverty of Indians. Gokhale's lectures in the Imperial Legislative Council for nearly ten years, educated both the rulers and the ruled. The Budget became the focus of the entire policy of the rule of the British focusing on tasks done and not done and the many squandered opportunities.

They also started newspapers and periodicals. Ram Mohun Roy was a journalist; Vidyasagar edited Jatrabodhini Patrika, Krishna Das Pal (Hindu Patriot), Lokhitawadi wrote extensively for journals and started his own. Agarkar's Sudharak is justifiably famous. Veerasalingam Puntulu's papers and journals are famous and single-handedly he gave shape to Telugu journalism and made it a force. The most famous of them was G. Subramania Iyer who founded the Hindu, the leading newspaper in the South today.

THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION-A LIBERAL DOCUMENT

If India was educated at all, in matters relating to politics, economics and society it was entirely due to the work of the liberals. It is this task that Gandhi continued, though his message and methods were different. The Congress annual gatherings till

1920 were essentially liberal concourses and even later the fundamental principles continued though the emphasis totally changed. The Indian Constitution is the culmination of the Liberal Tradition in India.

The Indian National Congress held its first meeting in December 1885 in Bombay city while British Indian troops were still fighting in Upper Burma. Thus, just as the British Indian empire approached its outermost limits of expansion, the institutional seed of the largest of its national successors was sown. Provincial roots of Indian nationalism, however, may be traced to the beginning of the era of crown rule in Bombay, Bengal, and Madras. Nationalism emerged in 19th-century British India both in emulation of and as a reaction against the consolidation of British rule and the spread of Western civilization. There were, moreover, two turbulent national mainstreams flowing beneath the deceptively placid official surface of British administration: the larger, headed by the Indian National Congress, which led eventually to the birth of India, and the smaller Muslim one, which acquired its organizational skeleton with the founding of the Muslim League in 1906 and led to the creation of Pakistan.

Many English-educated young Indians of the post-mutiny period emulated their British mentors by seeking employment in the ICS, the legal services, journalism, and education. The universities of Bombay, Bengal, and Madras had been founded in 1857 as the capstone of the East India Company's modest policy of selectively fostering the introduction of English education in India. At the beginning of crown rule, the first graduates of these universities, reared on the works and ideas of Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and Thomas Macaulay, sought positions that would help them improve themselves and society at the same time.

They were convinced that, with the education they had received and the proper apprenticeship of hard work, they would eventually inherit the machinery of British Indian government. Few Indians, however, were admitted to the ICS; and, among the first handful who were, one of the brightest, Surendranath Banerjea (1848-1925), was dismissed dishonourably at the earliest pretext and turned from loyal participation within the government to

active nationalist agitation against it. Banerjea became a Calcutta college teacher and then editor of The Bengalee and founder of the Indian Association in Calcutta. In 1883 he convened the first Indian National Conference in Bengal, anticipating by two years the birth of the Congress on the opposite side of India. After the first partition of Bengal in 1905, Banerjea attained nationwide fame as a leader of the swadeshi ("of our own country") movement, promoting Indian-made goods, and the movement to boycott British manufactured goods.

During the 1870s young leaders in Bombay also established a number of provincial political associations, such as the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha (Poona Public Society), founded by Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901), who had graduated at the top of the University of Bombay's first bachelor of arts class in 1862. Ranade found employment in the educational department in Bombay, taught at Elphinstone College, edited the Indu Prakash, helped start the Hindu reformist Prarthana Samaj (Prayer Society) in Bombay, wrote historical and other essays, and became a barrister, eventually being appointed to the bench of Bombay's high court. Ranade was one of the early leaders of India's emulative school of nationalism, as was his brilliant disciple Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915), later revered by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) as a political guru (preceptor). Gokhale, an editor and social reformer, taught at Fergusson College in Poona (Pune) and in 1905 was elected president of the Congress. Moderation and reform were the keynotes of Gokhale's life, and by his use of reasoned argument, patient labour, and unflagging faith in the ultimate equity of British liberalism, he was able to achieve much for India.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), Gokhale's colleague at Fergusson College, was the leader of Indian nationalism's revolutionary reaction against British rule. Tilak was Poona's most popular Marathi journalist, whose vernacular newspaper, Kesari ("Lion"), became the leading literary thorn in the side of the British. The Lokamanya ("Revered by the People"), as Tilak came to be called after he was jailed for seditious writings in 1897, looked to orthodox Hinduism and Maratha history as his twin sources of nationalist inspiration. Tilak called upon his compatriots to take

keener interest and pride in the religious, cultural, martial, and political glories of pre-British Hindu India; in Poona, former capital of the Maratha Hindu glory, he helped found and publicize the popular Ganesha (Ganapati) and Shivaji festivals in the 1890s. Tilak had no faith in British justice, and his life was devoted primarily to agitation aimed at ousting the British from India by any means and restoring swaraj ("self-rule" or independence) to India's people. While Tilak brought many non-English-educated Hindus into the nationalist movement, the orthodox Hindu character of his revolutionary revival (which mellowed considerably in the latter part of his political career) alienated many within India's Muslim minority and exacerbated communal tensions and conflict.

The viceroyalties of Lytton and Lord Ripon (governed 1880-84) prepared the soil of British India for nationalism, the former by internal measures of repression and the futility of an external policy of aggression, the latter indirectly as a result of the European community's rejection of his liberal humanitarian legislation. One of the key men who helped arrange the first meeting of the Congress was a retired British official, Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912), Ripon's radical confidant. After retiring from the ICS in 1882, Hume, a mystic reformer and ornithologist, lived in Simla, where he studied birds and theosophy. Hume had joined the Theosophical Society in 1881, as had many young Indians, who found in theosophy a movement most flattering to Indian civilization.

Helena Blavatsky (1831-91), the Russian-born cofounder of the Theosophical Society, went to India in 1879 to sit at the feet of Swami Dayananda Sarasvati (1824-83), whose "back to the Vedas" reformist Hindu society, the Arya Samaj, was founded in Bombay in 1875. Dayananda called on Hindus to reject the "corrupting" excrescences of their faith, including idolatry, the caste system, and infant marriage, and to return to the original purity of Vedic life and thought. The Swami insisted that post-Vedic changes in Hindu society had led only to weakness and disunity, which had destroyed India's capacity to resist foreign invasion and subjugation. His reformist society was to take root most firmly in the Punjab at the start of the 20th century, and it became that province's leading nationalist organization. Blavatsky

soon left Dayananda and established her own "Samaj," whose Indian headquarters were outside Madras city, at Adyar. Annie Besant (1847-1933), the Theosophical Society's most famous leader, succeeded Blavatsky and became the first and only British woman to serve as president of the Indian National Congress (1917).

THE UNENDING DEBATE ON SECULARISM

India is a multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-linguistic country where religion is central to the life of people. The Upanishads propound it profoundly as Sarva Dharma Samabhava which means equal respect for all religions.

India fortunately has not become a religious or a theocratic state like Pakistan. The Constitution declares India to be a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic, assuring its citizens of justice, equality and liberty. The Fathers of the Constitution were visionaries and were hopeful that there would be no discrimination based on religion. Though it was only later with 42nd amendment that the words, 'socialist' and 'secular' were adopted in the preamble, they had emphasised the secular foundation of the Indian state.

Secularism is an ideology that holds that religious issues should not be the basis of politics, or in the extreme sense, that religion has no place in public life. Secularism has been a widely debated subject in India particularly since 1963. Everyone claims to be a secularist. Even Hindutvavadis insist that they are true secularists. Unlike the West, the secularism in India is more political than philosophical.

It was George Holyoake (1817-1906) who adopted the word secularism in the early 1850s in a doctrine proclaiming science as the true guide of persons, morality as secular in origin, reason as the only authority, freedom of thought and speech, and all efforts to be directed to this life only. Secular attitude arose as a reaction to the religious domination during the medieval period.

Secular societies were founded in the 1850s based on this doctrine. Holyoake was sentenced to six months imprisonment for making the statement that "God should retire". His secularism was concerned with "this world without denying any other world-

--". On the other hand, Charles Bradlaugh who founded the Central Secular Society in 1866 held that "the logical consequence of secularism is the absolute denial of Providence".

While for Holyoake, ignoring God was enough, Bradlaugh insisted that God should be banished. Secularism for both meant a complete separation of the Church from the State and the abolition of all privileges granted to religious organisations.

Secularism in India has different meanings and implications. The word is never used like in the West-in the sense of atheism, or purely this worldly approach, rejecting otherworldly beliefs. It is not anti-religious. It means equal respect for all religions and cultures and that, therefore, there is no official state religion, or religious interference in government affairs.

According to Article 25, all those who reside in India are free to preach, practice and propagate religion of one's choice, subject of course to social health, and law and order. Secularism is an integral part of the basic structure of the Constitution and the Indian people.

In spite of this, there has been large scale religious intolerance and violence in India. Secularism is endangered. Politicians and political parties are playing the communal card and thus damaging the very basic nature of secular polity and plurality. They deliberately provoke religious fanaticism for political gains. It is now secularism versus communalism.

The demolition of the Babri Masjid was a blow to Indian secularism. The Gujarat carnage of 2002 is still vivid in our minds. More than 2000 innocent people lost their lives and hundreds of women were raped and murdered most barbarically under the very nose of Chief Minister Narendra Modi.

The Spirit of secularism needs to be revived and strengthened. As Asghar Ali Engineer observes, "In the eyes of people, religion, not politicians, come to be blamed. Religion per se, cannot be responsible for communal malaise. It is like a tool, which can be used either way."

Religion is for spiritual guidance and growth of people. It is a major resource for promoting peace, liberty and justice. We must use religions to maintain our plurality, which is our asset. Our

response must be based on respect, tolerance and compassion. Persons are sacred, unique, irreplaceable, and irreducible.

We need to build and promote a spirituality that is acceptable to all. It is an essential part of an individual's holistic health and well-being. It plays a major role in human and societal governance and development. After 9/11 terrorist attack, "God bless America" came easily to the lips of all Americans. Spirituality came alive. It established the fact that human beings can not do without it. The great scientist Albert Einstein once said that his every effort was to "know God's thoughts". Spirituality is to be "God-intoxicated" as it happened in the life of Spinoza, an ardent atheist.

Spirituality is often understood to do with escaping from life's temptations and challenges by going off to deserts and mountaintops to pray all day. It is often identified with matters other worldly, something to do with spirits, something associated with pious and religious observances and activities.

Spirituality is, according to Ursula King, "Anthropologically an exploration into what is involved in becoming fully human" and fully alive (spirit-filled). It points to something central to human life. It is the experience of being unique, being human, being something-a power, energy, presence, drive-that shapes one's actions and cultivates his or her life. It is what St. Augustine called as "restlessness." It is a path to God and to become gradually God-like. It is that which pertains to self or soul (atman).

God is Spirit. He cannot be conditioned by space, form, time, sex, caste, color, religion, and so on. He is beyond all these. The word spirit is to do with wind, the air we breathe in, and therefore life. Spirit is life and so God is life. Spirituality unfolds life that calls for transcendence-experience, awareness and appreciation of life beyond self. It helps a person to experience God as truth, love and peace. It takes him or her to something greater and higher. It takes a person beyond his or her egocentric nature and fills with other-centric attitude.

Spirituality is not opposed to religion. It is regarded sometime not as religion per se, but as the active and vital energy that transforms life. It is also not identical with religion. As William Irwin Thompson put it, "Religion is the form spirituality takes in

civilization". It is also regarded as a two-stroke process: the "upward stroke" of inner growth, changing oneself as one changes one's relationship with the external universe; and the "downward stroke" of manifesting improvement in the physical reality around oneself as a result of the inward change. We all have spirituality whether we are religious or not. It is that which unites all as human family from disintegrating and puts people in harmony with the universe.

The earth is one, but the world is divided. Religious leaders therefore should come together and take a bold stand against communal violence and promote harmony and peace. In a climate of acute crisis, they must show the way to the future. They must promote spirituality at the political level to liberate and empower politicians and leaders through a sense of shared purpose. Such a sense of purpose is a pre-requisite for good governance and national unity.

RELIGION AND SECULAR STATE

Dr. D. John Romus

Secularism, like religion, is much discussed, but understood differently in different cultural zones of the world. In our post-modern world, known for multiculturalism, the debate on secularism is focused on the "mode of separation" between state and religion, whereby the state is expected to guarantee fair treatment to all religions in the political community. This was also the original goal of secularism when it was invented as a political instrument for the governance of the state.

The historical narrative of political secularism goes back to the age of denominational wars of religion that shattered Western Christendom. Hence, the need arose for a new kind of political order where the people of competing confessional persuasions might live in amity, free from religious wrangling and violence. This meant, in practice, to separate the state from religion in some form so that the public domain might be governed by some political norms which might be either independent of all confessional allegiance, or based on a certain common ethic of peaceful coexistence agreed by all sects. These norms must be beyond revocation by any rival confessional claim and must ensure public order.

Out of these basics, two primary models of secular state developed as we have them in the liberal democracy. The first model equates separation as "complete exclusion" of religion from the public sphere by relegating it to the private sphere. Thus, religiously defined-goods have no place in the catalogue of ends the state promotes. When this position is extreme, the state becomes anti-religious. Moreover, its approach to religion is problematic, because in real life it is different to find instances in which there is a total separation between pubic and private spheres of belief.

The second model interprets separation as "principled distance" that the state keeps from religion in the public domain. Here the goal is not to make religion less relevant to public life and social policy, but to prevent the state from being unfair to any religion. This model holds that state and religion constitute two distinct spheres co-existing in the society with their respective areas of jurisdiction to care for people's temporal and spiritual needs. Both respect each other's values as well as their limits.

In the governance of the state, the principled distance model itself operates in two ways, namely, by being neutral to religions or equidistant from them. Positively speaking, both maintain a reasonable approach towards religion. The purpose of neutrality is to avoid state's interference in the religious affairs, and that of equidistance is to avert state's partiality to any particular religion.

The Constitution of the United States of America is considered to be the classical example of state's neutrality towards religion. The First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution prohibits the state to interfere in religious matters, either in establishing a religion or its free exercise.

Secularism is central to the Constitution of India. The Indian version of secularism is a synthesis of two streams of thought, the Western and the Indian. The Western model of principled distance variety has been taken and contextualised in harmony with India's composite culture and in defence of essential human values enhancing human dignity. Consequently, the Indian secularism stands for the separation of the state from religion, equal protection of all religions and active opposition to communalism. It is rightly known in popular parlance as equal regard for all religions (Sarva-dharma-sambhava).

Precisely, this sort of secularism calls for the separation of the state from religion to make this sort of polity to function so that the political goods of all communities are protected by the state. This happens only when the state in India is non-sectarian, which requires, in the logic of its operation, distancing the state from religion. However, Indian secularism neither subscribes to a policy of neutrality nor it is at parity with a policy of mere equidistance from religion, but keeps a strong sense of principled distance from all religions.

This means that, as the Constitution has it, freedom of religion is guaranteed to all, but the state is not prohibited from providing religious assistance-(including financial) provided it is on reasonable grounds and on non-sectarian basis. Moreover, the state in India is empowered with extensive powers to intervene in matters related to religious practices. In the scheme of separation understood as principled distance from religion, the state's intervention or non-intervention depends on which of the two better promotes a set of humanistic values for a life of equal dignity for all in the society.

It is exactly, this motive that impelled the state to undertake socio-cultural and religious reforms in the country and to introduce affirmative action for the marginalised. All this is done to protect the ordinary but dignified life of its citizens in the civil society. I believe that this delicate but humanizing secular fabric of our country can be maintained only by strengthening the forces of participatory democracy in the country. I wish that all who respect the dignity of every human person-believers and non-believers alike-shoulder their due responsibility in this national task.

1. Discovering and Reconciling Multiple Identities. First phase is when he is in a sense accepts 'multiple identities of being a Hindu, a Christian and an Indian'. Apparently he is comfortable with all three and is making a conscious effort to reconcile these multiple identities. This was a period when he is excited at the Bengal renaissance, in its Vedantic re-rooting; in its embrace of Western rationalism and in its uprising for Indian liberation.
2. The Dominance of a Catholic Identity. Second phase is when the Catholic identity seems to dominate when his

faith in Christ apparently over-rides the rest. At this phase he is an eminent Christian thinker and was eager to root Christianity in Indian philosophy and customs. He found Vedanta (advaita) as the suitable vehicle for this. Sophia is the mouth-piece of this; he adopts Indian sannyasi dress and wanders as a Hindu-Christian sannyasi.
3. Conflict(Irreconcilable) of Identities. Third phase is when these multiple identities bring conflicts in him and with other identities. First his enthusiasm to root Christianity in Indian ethos is met with opposition from Zaleski the nuncio; the latter finds that Hindu philosophy and custom are incompatible with Christianity. His initial enthusiasm to defend himself and get approval from the West did not find much support. At this juncture, his national identities come into the fore. He becomes a vocal critic of the West and the British and is disillusioned with Catholicism of the time.
4. Multiple Identities and Attempts to reconcile. This conflict brings forth the questions of multiple identities: His national aspirations conflict with his Catholic identity where Catholicism was identified with the west; his religious identity as a Christian is coming in conflict with his cultural identity where culture and religion is identified in Hinduism; his cultural identity as a Hindu and Indian brings him in conflict with the political identity of the western powers. In principle BU accepted his multiple identity; but he discovers that each of these identities have multiple identities and layers.
5. Question of Identity. Identity is a multiple and open-ended construction and not a watertight, compartmentalized, single, closed entity. In the S.Asian context identities refer to a variety of social phenomena, such as caste system, strong cultural values, ethnicity, nation, religion, descent group, class, occupation, lifestyle, gender, sexual orientation, and so on. They are often interconnected. One dimension influences the other. Despite the multiplicity of identities each one of us has a dominant identity enabling us to read the world from a particular perspective.

Globalization sharpens the question of identity and interrogates the status of religions in forming identities.

6. Why Identities Bring Conflicts. Identities refer to the way one defines oneself in relation to the other, and in the process one constructs 'boundaries'. Consequently we get constructed and dichotomized notions of "insider-outsider", "same-different", "me and the other", etc. While a sense of belonging to one's community can be seen as a resource, it can also firmly exclude other people. This is particularly true when a singular identity is taken to override the rest. 'The Clash of Civilization' projects a singular identity on people and presumes that humanity can be easily classified into civilizations based on a singular identity of religion or culture. This ignores the fact that there are multiple diverse identities that a people possesses.

7. The Question of a Dominant Identity. A person's religion needs not be his or her all encompassing and exclusive identity (Sen, p.14). The notion of a singular dominant identity is very divisive. Plural affiliations are more realistic. "Civilizational partitioning is a pervasively intrusive phenomenon in social analysis, stifling other-rich-ways of seeing people. It lays foundation for misunderstanding nearly everyone in the world, even before going on to the drumbeats of civilizational clash'. (Sen, p.42).

   The advocates of singular identity skillfully cultivate it in order to foment hostilities. In making a Hindu a Hindu, a Hutu a Hutu, a Tamil Tiger a Tamil Tiger, a Serbian a Serbian, 'a Born again Christian a Born again Christian' a specific identity is separated in one's self-understanding and the relevance of other affiliations are ignored. The 'sole' identity is instrumentalized; human being is miniaturized.(Sen, p.185).

   Asian can be seen only as Asian, not in any of her other affiliations; hence at best, is capable of talking about Asia and nothing more and beyond. The surprising phenomenon in a globalizing world is that there are many who would define themselves primarily in terms of their religious identity. The religious identity becomes the

dominant identity among the multiple identities. Imposing a singular identity on a gullible people is the best guarantee of championing terrorism. Whereas "the recognition of multiple identities and of the world beyond religious affiliations, even for very religious people, can possibly make some difference in the troubled world in which we live". (Sen Amartya, p.79).

8. Challenge of Identities: i) enable people to see differently, in their diverse affiliations, rather than in singular identity; ii) inculcate that another world is possible and that one can have global identity without losing other loyalties and identities; iii) Challenge for religious Identity is relate to and contain other identities without compromising its religiosity.

   Will it be too much of reductionism to claim that Sp.Exercises begin on a universal identity of 'Creator and creature' and ends with another universal identity of 'finding all in Him and in Him all'. Other loyalties and identities are preserved and fostered within the universal one. An important challenge for us will be to define our identity in a globalizing world of economies, cultures and religions.

9. Some Methodological Questions. i) Was BU phenomenon a result of the oriental fascination for the West and its rationality? ii) was BU part of the 'Orientalism' that found the Orient valuable and significant only in relation to the Occident? Creating a body of knowledge and studying it and naming it was part of this orientalism; is BU victim of that? iii) was he following the Christian missionary apologetics and a as a result trying to formulate a Christian identity?

The history of the freedom movement in Bengal points out that, revolutionary terrorism (1908-20), was a very significant chapter. The terrorists were often put behind the bars or deported to the Andamans after 1908. In the first place, Alipore bomb conspiracy case led to much excitement throughout India.

Journals like Bepin Pal's `New India', Aurobindo Ghosh's `Bande Mataram' (published in English), Brahmabandhab

Upadhyay's `Sandhya' and the `Yugantar' (brought out by a group associated with Barindrakumar Ghosh) from 1906 onwards called for a struggle for Swaraj. In practice, as later events showed, many of the extremist leaders would agree to settle for less-Tilak in January 1907, for instance, exposed his willingness to take `half a loaf rather than no bread', though with the intention `of getting the whole loaf in good time'.

`Sandhya' was a daily newspaper, published in the evening. Its editor Brahmabandhab Upadhyay was a liberal-minded writer, and the chief characteristic feature of this paper was to explore significant ideas by sarcastic commentary. According to Dr. Amales Tripathi, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in his novels referred to the `Geeta', to progress towards a new `Kurukshetra' by making the dream of Mahabharata successful. His bold imaginations influenced the later ages. Hindu extremists like Tilak, Aurobindo, Lala Lajpat Rai, Brahmo Bepin Pal and converted Catholic Brahmobandhab were no exception.

In 1907, Bipin Chandra Pal wrote in his paper, New India: "It was this sturdy patriot, whose almost unaided exertion, has brought the people of Bengal to a practically resistful attitude today. Of all men, it was he who imparted a militant character to our Swadeshi Movement." Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya, the man thus eulogized, contributed significantly to the nationalist movement. The nature of this needs reexamination today as we proceed towards commemorating his 100th death anniversary.

Upadhyaya made his Bengali daily Sandhya into a popular newspaper, which drew the masses into the mainstream of the political movement. He lent the Bengal partition agitation of 1905 so much strength that its ultimate success may, with fairness, be traced back to him. He gave Indian nationalism a mass appeal that anticipated Gandhiji's own move by decades. His fearlessness and selflessness were a tremendous inspiration to the nation.

On September 20, 1906, Upadhyaya through Sandhya called for complete independence-"impossible at present. But nonetheless, that is the goal we should always keep before our eyes." He was the first national leader to suggest this. Aurobindo Ghose had not yet entered politics, having arrived in Bengal only a month earlier. Upadhyaya became a symbol of the desire for Swaraj.

The gulf between extremists and moderates widened since the Congress session at Benares in 1905. Upadhyaya took the initiative to invite Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Kharpade to Bengal and organize the Shivaji Festival. In 1906, he opposed Surendranath Banerjea's scheme for a dominion status and was instrumental in engineering the disengagement of the extremists from the moderates. The final split came at Surat in 1907.

The extremists, with Tilak as their leader, now demanded full administrative control of the government. But Upadhyaya was not happy with this demand. Tilak's Swaraj envisaged only administrative autonomy. In contrast, Sandhya declared in 1907: "We want complete independence. The country cannot prosper so long as the veriest shred of the Feringhi's supremacy over it is left." There came into existence in Bengal many secret societies such as the Anusilan Samiti which preferred the cult of the bomb and the revolver. They needed a philosophy and Sandhya met this requirement. The extremists avidly read the stirring articles Upadhyaya wrote.

The agitation against the partition gathered strength from August 7 and reached its peak on October 16, 1905. It had by then merged with the boycott and swadeshi movements. Gradually, it outgrew provincial limitations and broadened into Gandhiji's national campaign for freedom. But its roots lay in the movement of Bengal and in such patriots as Upadhyaya, who first conceived its aims and methods.

In August 1907, the premises of the Sandhya were searched. In September and October of the same year two sedition cases were filed against the editor, manager and printer of the paper. One of the articles forming the subject matter of the prosecution was entitled 'Ekan theke gechhi premer dai"(now I am stuck on account of love) and this appeared in Sandhya on 13th August 1907.

Upadhyaya wrote: "We have said over and over again that we are not Swadeshi only so far as salt and sugar are concerned…. What we want is the emancipation of India. Our aim is that India may be free, that the stranger may be driven from our homes, that the continuity of the learning, the civilization and the system of the Rishis may be preserved…"

"O Mother! Let us be born again and again in India till your chains fall off. First, let the Mother be free, and then shall come our own release from the worldly bonds.... O Feringhi, ... Our power is more than human. It is divine.... We have all the advantages of the ancient greatness of India on our side. We are immortal.... We hereby summon you to battle."

Bail was granted to the accused, but daily they had to attend the court from morning till evening and this weary waiting made Upadhyaya's hernia worse and worse. The case was put off till after the Puja holidays, and so he could get himself admitted to what was then called Campbell Hospital. Upadhyaya was operated on October 22. But post-operational complications set in, and on Sunday, October 27, 1907, at 8.30 a.m., he died with the word by which he usually referred to Christ-'Thakur"-on his lips. Amid the pomp befitting a national hero, Upadhyaya's body was cremated according to Hindu custom.

Why was Upadhyaya so soon forgotten? Why was no attempt made to perpetuate his memory? Why are India's own historians so unaware of his contribution? Tarachand, R.C. Majumdar and A.R. Desai talk about Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghose, Surendranath Banerjea and Rabindranath Tagore. But the name of Upadhyaya is missing in their accounts. Pal himself had declared before independence: "The ideals of our present nationalism have been obtained from Upadhyaya Brahmabandhav to a very great extent. But it seems that people are forgetting about it. We are trying to keep alive the memory of so many people, but as regards Upadhyaya Brahmabandhv we did not have even a condolence meeting."

Shyam Sunder Chakravarty wrote in The Bengalee on October 26, 1924: "Upadhyaya Brahmabandhav is now an almost forgotten man. In his case we find a complete justification of the adage that the world knows very little of its greatest men". Mohitlal Majumdar wrote in the Bangadarshan in Magh 1355 (January-February, 1928): "That lion-man, the heart dedicated to the country, that sannyasi ... Bengal has forgotten. They do not commemorate or remember him."

What was the source of Upadhyaya's courage and strength? None other than his religio-cultural convictions. Since they represent a dynamic process of growth, it is a difficult task to pin point them. To begin Upadhyaya originally Bhabani Charan Banerji, had been a disciple of Keshub Cunder Sen for some time. He was a friend of Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore. It was with him that Tagore founded Santiniketan.Upadhyaya came to know Jesus Christ through Sen and through his own uncle, Reverend Kalicharan Banerji. In 1891, he received baptism from an Anglican priest but, in the same year, he became a Roman Catholic. In 1894, he became a Sannyasi and adopted the new name, which meant "friend of God".

From 1891 to 1901 God was his focus, God as experienced in Jesus and interpreted in terms of Hindu thought. His literary activities of this period included the editing of Sophia (January 1894-March1899), a Catholic monthly journal; Sophia (June 16, 1900-December 8, 1900), a weekly; and The Twentieth Century (January 1901-December 1901), a monthly. Because of total discouragement from church authorities he almost stopped his theological writing in 1901. Upadhyaya then became fully engaged in the nationalist movement. In November 1904 he brought out Sandhya (1904-1907) and in March 1907 Swaraj, a Bengali weekly.

From 1891 to 1901 Upadhyaya had been making a distinction between Samaj dharma and Sadhana dharma. He was a Hindu-Christian or rather a Vedantin-Christian. Samaj dharma, which implies living manners, customs, eating and dressing, all of them based on the observance of the caste system, pronounced him a Hindu. In terms of spiritual practice (sadhana) and the quest for salvation (mukti), he was a Christian.

Till about 1898, Upadhyaya had the idea that the Vedas should be the basis for Christian theology in India. He also thought that, as opposed to theism, Advaita Vedanta propagates pantheism. But, as he came to study Advaita Vedanta more closely, it become his firm belief that pantheism would be crushed out of existence by Advaita Vedanta, and true theism could be made to flourish in India.

According to pantheism, the universe is the necessary and intrinsic life of God; God is nothing more than the universe and the universe is nothing less than God. True theism, for which Advaita stands, holds that God transcends the universe. Creation

is not necessary for God to live. Being of the finite is derived, dependent and contingent, while that of the Infinite is self-existent, independent and necessary.

Upadhyaya felt that Advaita Vedanta would make the natural truths of theism and the supernatural dogmas of Christianity more explicit and consonant with reason than was done by scholastic philosophy. Advaita Vedanta is to supply a new garb to the religion of Christ.

The main contribution of Upadhyaya to Indian Christian theology lies in his explanation of the doctrine of Trinity as Saccidananda and the doctrine of creation as Maya. True, he is following here the basic method of putting an already formulated Christian theology in Vedantic terms. But, in effect, his effort has accomplished much more than this.

Upadhyaya never tried to reinterpret the Advaita Vedantic concepts. What he establishes is, that Trinity is Saccidananda and that Creation is Maya. From such a conclusion the way ahead is clear. It is possible to shed new light on the mysteries of Trinity and Creation from the Vedantic doctrines. Vedanta, to some extent, receives authority to formulate an understanding of Trinity in terms of Saccidananda, of Christ in terms of Chit and of Creation in terms of Maya.

Of course, Upadhyaya has not explicitly proclaimed so. But he has indicated the way forward. Inasmuch as he was the first to indicate such a way he is truly the Father of Indian Christian theology as well as Indian dialogical theology.

In Advaita Vedanta, Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Intelligence-Bliss) indicates the Supreme Being, Brahman. According to Upadhyaya, to speak of Brahman as Sat-Chit-Ananda means that Brahman knows Himself/Herself and from that self-knowledge proceeds His/Her eternal beatitude. Brahman is related of necessity only to the infinite image of His/Her own being, mirrored in the ocean of His/Her knowledge. This relation of Being (Sat) to itself in self-knowledge (Chit) is one of perfect harmony, bliss (Ananda).

In Upadhyaya's opinion, the Christian doctrine of God as Trinity is "exactly the same" as the Vedantic conception of Brahman as Sat-Chit-Ananda because in the Trinity (Father, Son and the

Spirit) the knowing self is the Father; the known self or the self-begotten by His knowledge is the Son; and the Holy Spirit is the spirit of reciprocal love proceeding from the Father and the Son. Upadhyaya wrote a Sanskrit hymn, "Vande Saccidanandam" in adoration of Parabrahman who, in Christian faith, is referred as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This hymn is now very popular among Indian Christians.

According to Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya, Maya signifies the will-power (sankalpa) of God. It means that creation is by the power (sakti) of the will of God. Maya involves three truths: God is not necessarily a creator; creatures are non-beings, transformed as it were into being; and this transformation is caused by the mysterious power of the will of God.

It is Upadhyaya's contention that Maya, which explains creation and the Christian doctrine of Creation, are identical because, according to the Christian doctrine also, God does not create out of necessity but through the overflow of his/her perfections. Creations has no being in itself, what it has is derived being and is the effect of the divine thought. Upadhyaya even said that Maya could express Creation in a far better way than the Latin root, "creare".

Upadhyaya's religion was not sectarian but universal. He encouraged a dialogue for relational convergence of religions. Today, when India strives for communal harmony, Upadhyaya's life can give at least useful pointers. If Hinduism and Christianity can be unified, as he demonstrated, there is no reason why the same cannot happen between Hinduism and Islam.

His political commitment to his motherland again was total, for her complete liberation. He wanted us to be born again and again till Mother India's chains fall off completely. Independence we got, but still is not our country, our Mother, in chains even today? Mother, give us some more Upadhyayas to fight for the total independence of our people today.

Rabindranath Tagore said Brahma Bandhab was a Roman Catholic sanyasi on the one hand and a Vedantist on the other. Brahma Bandhab was worshipper of Christ and remained a Roman Catholic to the end. What he did was to synthesise Catholic religion

and Vedanta. Hinduism is a very broad religion. While enforcing perfect conformity in external matters, it allows every one to follow his Guru in matters of belief and conscience. Upadhyay made a very generous use of Hindu Tolerance. He chooses Christ as his Guru and became a Roman Catholic for the salvation of his soul, but in civic matters he remained a Hindu for the Salvation of Hindu society.

Brahmananda was ahead of his time-miles ahead. He was powerful, he was fearless, he was detached, he was unselfish. It was his strength-the strength of his entire ramification. He was a bold pioneer of Indian independence but our focus of attention is his spiritualism and unique synthesis of Hinduism and Catholic Christianity.

According to Upadhyay, Hinduism, Theosophy and Christianity were all three names covering the same reality; three forms of religion, three ways to God; three rivers leading their waters to the same ocean.

The influence of Brahmabhandab Upadhyaya extends from the time of his generation until today. As a Hindu of Brahmin origin growing up in the simmering cauldron of philosophical and political unrest of late 19th century West Bengal he grew up with a variety of influences around him, such as luminaries like the well known Christian leader Kali Charan Bannurji, the Brahmo Samaj and Naba Bidhan leader Keshub Chandra Sen, the mystic Kali devotee Ramakrishna Paramhans, his fervent Vedantic disciple Vivekananda and dynamic educator Rabindranath Tagore.

Upadhayaya, or rather Bhabanicaran Bandyopadhyay, as he was known before his conversion to Christianity, was an tireless educator and social worker with a genuine spiritual dimension as a Brahmo missionary. In spite of his later being a convert to the Christian community he never abandoned his Hindu cultural identity. This cultural identity is something that blurred the lines of Hindu and Christian culturally and it seems his blurred vision wrought an incredible tension within him.

The extreme pressure and suppression of his writings by the very Roman Catholic church he had come to love made his writing become even more caustic. The growing unrest in the country and

specifically West Bengal certainly influenced his even more confusing step of undergoing a prayaschit sanskar and entrance back into the Hindu community.

How much both Christians and Hindus in his geographical area would understand this step in light of his desire to be involved in the country's freedom movements from within Hindu community is unknown to us. It is known that this martyr of the freedom movement, who penned the great sanskrit hymn to the Trinity Vande Saccitananda, was also a contextual martyr for all of us to learn from today as well

THE INDIAN NATIONALISTIC WRITINGS

The heritage of the ancient and medieval periods of Indian culture is still a part of India today. But when India became exposed to European culture--and eventually became part of the British Empire--it came heavily under the influence of Western ideas. Some Indian writers reacted to the European presence by reviving the ancient values of Hinduism. Other writers eagerly adopted Western forms of writing such as journalism and the novel. Even some European writers like Ruskin Bond settled down in India and established their own trend which largely affected the modern Indian literature.

The modern period of Indian literature began in the 1800's, a period of great social change. All the major languages evolved a thriving literature which they still possess. The most important development was the increased importance of prose. Although prose works had existed in earlier Indian literature, most traditional texts (which were largely religious in content or feeling) had been written in verse. During the modern period, Indian prose achieved maturity as a vehicle for expressing a wide range of ideas.

Two related developments helped the process of change. One was the introduction of the printing press by Christian missionaries (scribes had hand-copied texts in earlier times).

The other development was the birth of Indian journalism. The spread of Western-style education helped produce a new readership for the new literature. Writers expressed ideas of social reform, and laid great emphasis on realism.

Patriotic Writings

During the late 1800's, the various regions of India began to share a common purpose in reacting to the British presence in their country. A nationalist movement gradually grew in strength. This movement was the inspiration behind much Indian writing in the 1800's and early 1900's. A common pattern exists in the modern literature of most Indian languages.

The spread of journalism helped the development of prose writing, with the short story becoming especially popular. Writers such as the Bengali Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894) attacked colonialism and created their own brand of nationalism. Bankim's historical novels achieved popularity throughout the subcontinent and helped spread nationalism and patriotism. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), the greatest name in modern Indian literature, made federalism an important part of his concept of national ideology. He said that the unity of India should be a unity in diversity.

Patriotic writings grew almost simultaneously in different languages as part of the resistance of a community to foreign rule. For example, Rangalal in Bengali, Mirza Ghalib (1797-1869) in Urdu, and Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850-1885) in Hindi all expressed their opposition to colonial rule and wrote about the glorification of India. The Bengali writer Michael Madhusan Dutt (1824-1873) wrote the first modern epic in an Indian language. Subramania Bharati (1882-1921) was a great Tamil poet who revolutionized the poetic tradition in Tamil. Maithili Saran Gupta (1886-1964) and Bhai Vir Singh (1872-1957), writing in Hindi and Punjabi respectively, took themes frommythology and history for their patriotic epics.

The first Indian novels appeared in the late 1800's. Krishnamona Chetty's Sri Ranga Raja (1872) was the first novel in Telugu; Samuel V. Pillai's Pratap Mudaliyar Charitram (1879) was the first in Tamil; and Chandu Menon's Indu Lekha (1889) the first in Malayalam. These novels questioned contemporary social practices and customs. Similarly, the Bengali novel Phulmani O Karunar Bibaran (1852) by the English writer H. Catherine Mullens and the Hindi novel Pariksha Guru (1882) by Lala Sriniwas Das examined social issues.

Historical novels were written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in Bengali and Hari Narayan Apte in Marathi to describe the glorious past of India and instill nationalist sentiments in their readers. Tagore wrote his novel Gora (1910) to challenge colonial rule and to give new meaning to Indian nationalism.

Gandhi's influence. The ideas of Gandhi deeply affected India in the decades leading up to independence in 1947. Gandhi, writing in Gujarati, English, and Hindi, used the language of common people. He used the weapons of truth and nonviolence and spoke out in favour of traditional values and against industrialization. Gandhi became a symbol of peace and idealism. Writers of fiction and poetry in almost all the Indian languages adopted the Gandhian figure as a theme of cultural nationalism.

Saratchandra Chattopadhyay (1876-1938) is one of the most popular Bengali novelists. A Gandhian and a socialist, his influence spread throughout India with translations of his books in various Indian languages. Premchand (1880-1936) wrote novels in Hindi. He wrote about the plight of the poor in India. His greatest achievement, the novel Godan (The Gift of a Cow, 1936), tells the story of a debt-laden peasant and his struggle for survival.

The Progressive Writers' Movement

The progressive movement brought together Gandhian and Marxist ideas about society. The three major influences on modern Indian literature were Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), Rabindranath Tagore, and Mohandas Gandhi. Their writings marked the movement of Indian romanticism. Sri Aurobindo wrote mainly in English. His poetry and the philosophical treatise The Life Divine express his search for the divine in man. Tagore's quest for beauty leads him to the conclusion that service to humanity is the best form of contact with God. Tagore was a novelist, poet, playwright, composer, and painter of great renown. His collection of poetry Gitanjali (Song Offerings) won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. Tagore inspired writers of romantic poetry in many Indian languages. Indian romantic poetry contains a strong element of mysticism. The greatest Urdu poet of this era is Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1938). His best-known collection of poetry is Baan-e-Daraa (Song of Eternity) (1932).

In 1936, Mulk Raj Anand and other Indian writers living in London established the Progressive Writers' Association. The movement soon spread throughout India. Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Telugu, and Malayalam were the main languages of the progressive movement.

The principal Hindi poet of the progressive group was Nagarjun. The first Indian novelist of social realism was the Oriya writer Fakir Mohan Senapati (1893-1918). The movement also attracted such eminent Urdu poets as Josh Malihabadi and Fiaz Ahmad Fiaz. The search for modernity. In the period leading up to independence, Indian writers tried to find a personal expression of their place in history. Many writers of this time reflect a sense of despair and helplessness in society. The most important Bengali poet after Tagore is Jibananda Das (1899-1954). In Gujarati, Uma Shankar Joshi initiated a new, experimental poetry. Poets writing in other languages include Amrita Pritam (Punjabi), B. S. Mardekhar (Marathi), and Gopal Krishna Adija (Kannada). All these poets developed their own personal idioms to reflect the problems of contemporary life. Of course the printing press was still under control of the Britishers. Hence the Indians could not take full advantage of the press. No wonder then that regional journalism and writings developed at a rapid speed. Some of the regional writers brought our Regional papers too. The Ananda Bazaar Patrika and Jugantar in Bengal are among the oldest papers, having largest circulation even today.

Of course the oldest surviving paper which started in 1822 is the Gujarati Daily Bombay Samachar.

Among the well known Journalists during the Indian National movement, Subramanya Bharathy's name figures on the top. Here is a brief sketch of his life and works. Subramanya Bharathy (December 11, 1882-September 11, 1921) better known as Mahakavi Bharathiar (Maha Kavi meaning Greatest of Poets) to his legions of Tamil languageTamil speaking readers, is often deemed one of the greatest poets of twentieth-century India. A prolific writer of immense genius and perspicacity, Bharathiar was also one of the most prominent leaders of the Indian independence movement in South India. Born on December 11, 1882 in the idyllic Tamil village of Ettayapuram, Bharathy was educated at a local high

school where his talents as a poet were recognized even at the age of 11. After an early marriage, Bharathy, curious to see the outside world, left for Kashi in 1898. The next four years of his life, served as a passage of discovery, where Bharathy discovered a country in tumult, outside his small hamlet. Immersing himself in Hindu spirituality and nationalism, Bharathy returned to his Southern home, an iconoclast who shattered without hesitation, every meaningless social taboo and rule that held sway amidst the orthodox South Indians. By the early 1900s Bharathy had become completely involved in the nationalist movement and took active part in the Congress meets through out the country.

During this period, Bharathy understood the need to be well-informed of the world outside and took avid interest in the world of American journalism and the print media of the West. Bharathy joined as Assistant Editor of the Swadeshamitran, a Tamil daily in 1904. By April 1907, he had started and become the editor of the Tamil weekly India and the English newspaper Bala Bharatham.

These papers not only served the purpose of enlightening the masses on the affairs of the nation and the world outside, but also as a means of expressing Bharathy's stupendous creativity, which began to peak at this time. Bharathy started to publish his poems regularly in these editions. From complex religious hymns to rousing nationalist anthems, from contemplations on the relationship between God and Man to Songs on the Russian and French revolutions, Bharathy's subjects were truly diverse.

This period produced such masterpieces as Kannan Paattu (The Song of Krishna), where Bharathy sought to portray The Divine as the source of all of humanity's passions in the most accessible of forms including in the roles of a love-lorn lover, of a mischievous child, of an innocent child, and of a wise teacher.

The poetry and imagination of Bharathy, of this era, has rarely been surpassed in any literature that followed. Bharathy also published two of his most widely read epics during this period Panchali Sapatham (Draupadi's Vow) a poetic semi-political reflection on greed, pride and righteousness derived from the Indian epic Mahabharata and Kuyil Paatu (Song of The Cuckoo) an ode and a tribute to the poet's favorite Shelley. As a journalist,

Bharathy was the first in India to introduce caricatures and political cartoons to his newspapers; they were satirical and angry hand drawn illustrations of the poet that improvised heavily on the works of his inspiration Thomas Nast. By 1912 Bharathy was already a legend in South India and his political meetings in Pondicherry, where he lived since 1908, were attracting multitudes of young patriots, ready to join the non-violent constitutional agitation against the British rule.

This led to a systematic British suppression of what was dubbed as the "militancy". Several arrests and bans on his newspapers followed. The poet's health was badly affected by the imprisonments and by 1920, when a General Amnesty Order finally removed restrictions on his movemnet, Bharathy was struggling in penury and failing health resulting in his tragic premature death. Bharathy died on September 11, 1921, not yet forty years of age. The legacy of the poet however endures among the Tamil. Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1932) a patriot, nationalist politician, renowned orator, journalist and writer. Bipin Chandra Pal was born on 7 November 1858 in Sylhet in a wealthy Hindu Kayastha family. His father Ramchandra Pal, a village zamindar and a prominent member of the Sylhet Bar was influenced by Hindu rituals and Islamic thought though he was a follower of Vaishnavism. Pal started his career in early 1879 as a Headmaster of a High School and served in this capacity in different schools in and outside Sylhet. For sometime (1890-91) he worked as the librarian and secretary of the Calcutta Public Library. While in Calcutta during his student life, he came in close contact with some prominent personalities like keshab chandra sen, shibnath shastri and Bijoy Krishna Goswami. Under the influence of Keshab Chandra Sen he was attracted to the Brahma movement. Bijoy Krishna Goswami also tremendously influenced his spiritual ideas. His association with Sivanath Sastri made him conscious of the spirit of social revolt and patriotism.

Surendranath Banerjea inspired Bipin Pal to take part in active politics. Soon, however, he became a convert to the extremist ideas of BG Tilak, Lajpat Rai and aurobinda ghosh, though he could not accept Tilak's concept of Hindu nationalism. He was an exponent of 'composite patriotism' which, he thought, was suitable

for a country like India. Bipin Chandra Pal was connected with the progressive force of the Congress since 1885 and attended the second and the third annual sessions of the Congress held in Calcutta and Madras in 1886 and 1887 respectively. He compelled the Congress to take up the cause of the Assam Tea-garden labourers who were cruelly treated by the planters. Bipin Pal went to study comparative theology in England in 1898 but after a year came back to India and started preaching the ideal of Swaraj (complete independence) through his weekly journal the New India. Imbued with great patriotic zeal, he devoted himself to the freedom movement of India. He presided over the Bombay session of the indian national congress in 1904. Following the partition of bengal, 1905, Bipin Pal started a daily paper the Bande Mataram and became its chief editor. He firmly stood against the partition of Bengal on the ground that it was a calculated move of the government to split the Bengalis and thus to break their growing political influence. With a view to enlisting the mass support behind the anti-partition campaign, Bipin Pal, along with other anti-partitionists, organised propaganda tour in various parts of Bengal, Assam, UP and Madras.

Pal was one of the architects of the swadeshi movement, which swept over India during the days following the partition of Bengal. He suffered imprisonment for six months in 1907 for his refusal to give evidence against Aurovinda Ghosh in the so-called Bande Mataram Sedition Case. On his release, Pal went to England in 1908 'to lead the life of an enforced exile' and stayed there for three years. After the First World War, he visited England for the third time in 1919 as a member of the Home Rule League deputation led by Tilak. He presided over the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Barisal in 1921. He did not involve in the non-cooperation movement because it was merged with the Khilafat cause and criticised the bengal pact (1923) of chitta ranjan das. He could not share the views of Maulana Mohammad Ali on the nature of the communal problem in India (1920-25). From 1925 onward, he, however, retired from active politics.

Bipin Chandra Pal encouraged journalism and started the Bangla weekly Paridarshak in Sylhet (1886). He worked as Assistant Editor of the Bengali Public Opinion (1882) and served the Lahore

Tribune for a short time (1887). For sometime he was the editor of The Democrat and The Independent. He published a biography (in Bangla) of Queen Victoria in 1887. Among his other books Indian Nationalism, Nationality and Empire, Swaraj and the Present Situation, The Basis of Social Reform, The Soul of India, The New Spirit and Studies in Hinduism are prominent.

A man of undaunted spirit, Bipin Chandra Pal made no compromise in the sphere of politics when it was a question of conviction and conscience. He revolted against the evils and abuses of the Hindu society at a very early stage of his life. He championed the cause of Indian education with special emphasis on female education and advocated the equality of male and female. A renowned orator, Bipin Chandra Pal inspired his audience during the Indian nationalist movements. He occupies a unique place in the history of the freedom movement of India. He died in Calcutta in 1932.

It is interesting to note that many thinkers, political leaders, writers and journalists went out, mostly to U.K. to study and made use of their writings to awaken the educated people. Some worked for the British government and later switched to independent journalism.

People like Dr, Rajendra Prasad, Raja Ram Mohan Roy,were among the prominent thinkers of the day. Interestingly even fiction writing, poetry and lyrics found place in some of the Dailies at that time and influenced the educated mass. To penetrate among the uneducated class of people they used word of mouth and public speeches. Ofcourse many documentary films were produced too and some of the leaders also used radio as a medium of communication. Although in a nascent stage, journalism was definitely making its presence felt.

Gandhi was the most effective mass medium of the 20th century. His journalism belonged to an era when there was neither radio nor television.

Such was the power of his 'soul communication' that whatever he said and wrote reached the farthest corners of this country within days and to the entire world thereon. Mahatma Gandhi, in a journalistic career spanning nearly four decades, edited six

journals. None, including Harijan and Navajivan, could boast a circulation of more than a few thousand copies. But such was Gandhi's grasp of the basics of mass communication that he ensured that his daily "outpourings of heart and soul" reached all.

If one were to ask the question as to who came first-Gandhi-the-freedom-fighter or Gandhi-the-media-crusader-the truth would be that Gandhi-the-journalist pre-dated Gandhi the freedom fighter by at least 20 years. In less than a few months' stay in South Africa, Gandhi realized the need to become a journalist to fight for the rights of the Indian community. And he brought the highest qualities the profession could boast of-courage in the face of adversity, unswerving adherence to truth, pursuit of public causes, and objectivity inpresentation.

His letters to the editors of South African dailies are a lesson to all journalists on how to fight injustice in a country where the laws are loaded against one section of the people, without giving offence to the rulers themselves.

A telling example of this trait was his letter dated October 25, 1894 to the Times of Natal, which carried a contemptuously worded editorial titled, 'Rammysammy' Gandhi wrote: "You would not allow the Indian or the native the precious privilege (of voting) under any circumstances, because they have a dark skin. You would look the exterior only.

So long as the skin is white it would not matter to you whether it conceals beneath it poison or nectar. To you the lip-prayer of the Pharisee, because he is one, is more acceptable than the sincere repentance of the publican, and this, I presume, you would call Christianity."

Gandhi adds: "You may; it is not Christ's. Sir, may I venture to offer a suggestion? Will you re-read your New Testament? Will you ponder over your attitude towards the coloured population of the Colony? Will you then say you can reconcile it with the Bible teachings or the best British traditions? If you have washed your hands clean of both Christ and the British tradition, I can have nothing to say; I gladly withdrawwhat I have written. Only, it will then be a sad day for British and for India if you have many followers."

After 10 years of relentless crusade, Gandhi realised that the twin tasks of mobilizing public opinion and influencing official decisions required a regular newspaper. Thus was born Indian Opinion in June 1903. He was clear about the nature and content of his newspaper. It would not carry any advertisements nor try to make money. Instead, he sought subscribers who would give donations. It was while writing in Indian Opinion that Gandhi stumbled on the concept of satyagraha.

Writing on satyagraha in South Africa, he said: "Indian Opinion was certainly a most useful and potent weapon in our struggle." The journal was to Gandhi "a mirror of his own life".

In My Experiments with Truth, he wrote: "Week after week I poured out my soul in its columns and expounded the principles and practice of satyagraha as I understood it. I cannot recall a word in these articles set down without thought or deliberation or a word of conscious exaggeration, or anything merely to please. Indeed, the journal became for me a training in self-restraint and for friends a medium through which to keep in touch with my thoughts."

Indian Opinion lasted for 11 years. It more or less forced the South African provincial regimes to modify their repressive laws against Indians. One day Gandhi got a call from Bihar where the Indigo farmers of Champaran were subjected to the same kind of indignity and exploitation as the indentured labourers in South Africa.

He promptly went there and investigated the issues, and produced a report that would be the envy of the greatest investigative journalist anywhere in the world. After Champaran it was only a matter of time before the Mahatma took to journalism as his most potent weapon of satyagraha. As coincidence would have it, Gandhi was persuaded to take over the editorship of Young India. Simultaneously, he started to edit and write in Navajivan, then a Gujarati monthly.

Gandhi's writings in it were translated and published in all the Indian language newspapers. Later Navajivan was published in Hindi, as Gandhi was convinced that Hindi would be the national language of free India. The Mahatma's crusade for the

repeal of the Press Act of 1910 was a unique piece of journalism. He was telling the rulers that it was in the best interests of the government to repeal the law.

Issue after issue of Young India and Navajivan carried samples of the Mahatma's journalistic genius which blended seemingly earnest appeals to the government to do what was "just and righteous". In South Africa his writings often made the white racists look ridiculous: "The white barber refused to cut my black hair", extending colour prejudice to not only non-Christian skin but non-Christian hair as well.

In March 1922, Gandhi was charged with spreading disaffection by writing seditious articles in Young India. In his own inimitable manner Gandhi said: "I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a government, which in its totality has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under the British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a belief, I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system."

The burden of leading a nation towards freedom and the contingency of having to face trials followed by jail terms, did not stem the flow of writings from Gandhi's pen. There was not a day when he was not writing on some issue or the other in Young India and Navajivan. To these he added Harijan, Harijan Sevak, and Harijan Bandu, which became the Mahatma's potent media for carrying his message to the weakest sections of India. Young India and Navajivan folded up in January 1932 when Gandhi was imprisoned for a long spell.

Between 1933 and 1940, Harijan (English), Harijan Bandu (Gujarati) and Harijan Sevak (Hindi) became the Mahatma's voice to the people of India. These newspapers found the Mahatma concentrating on social and economic problems. Caste disparities and such instruments of social deprivation as untouchablity and ostracisation were the targets of the Mahatma's crusade. Gandhi's assessment of the newspapers of the day was not complimentary.

He found them commercial, afraid of the government and not truthful in reporting. His last word on the Indian newspapers came at a prayer meeting in Delhi on June 19, 1946. He said: "If

I were appointed dictator for a day in the place of the Viceroy, I would stop all newspapers."

He paused and added with a mischievous wink: "With the exception of Harijan, of course." Nehru was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge. When he returned to India in 1912, he practised as a barrister.

This was hardly an unexpected move as his father was the famous journalist and lawyer Motilal Nehru. Nehru became involved in Congress after the massacre at Amritsar in 1919. In 1921, Nehru was arrested and put in prison for activities associated Congress. Between 1921 and 1946, he spent 9 years in prison. When he was out of prison, he had his freedom of movement heavily restricted by the British authorities.

In 1929, partly as a result of his ability and fame and also because of Gandhi's support, Nehru became president of Congress. As a result, he became a lynchpin in the negotiations that were to take place between the British and Congress over independence. He tainted his reputation by failing to give the British full support for their campaign against the Japanese in the Far East during World War Two. However, when India was given independence in 1947, Nehru was the obvious choice for Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

As India's leader, he kept the nation non-aligned. He kept this independent stance to acquire money from whatever source as he realised that India needed outside funding if she was to modernise. Nehru attempted to mediate in the Korean War and during the 1950's crisis in Vietnam. He was idolised by the Indian population and his death in May

1964, robbed the Third World of its natural leader. He was succeeded as prime Minister by Lal Shastri, who in turn was succeeded by Nehru's daughter, Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1966. 'Kill Me First' Reproduced below is a box item published in the National Herald of 5 November 1946 on Jawaharlal Nehru's protest against the killing of Muslims in Bihar.

"IF YOU want to kill a Muslim you must kill me first and proceed to do whatever you choose after marching over my body", said Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru addressing a public. meeting at

Taregna, one of the worst affected areas where the railway station had been burnt and a number of people were killed.

Addressing meetings at Poonpoon, Nadaul and Jahanabad, Pandit Nehru made it plain that the Government would take the most stringent measure in quelling disturbances....

He made a pointed reference to the majority community in the province and said that the shouts of Mahatma Gandhiji-Ki-Jai or Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru-Ki Jai did not sound pleasing to his ears when he knew that they had indulged in acts of violence instead of sacrificing their lives to protect their Muslim brethren. By these acts they had proved traitors to their country and placed serious obstacles in the path of Swaraj.....

Everywhere the crowds took his rebukes silently, and at several places shouted the slogan "Hindu Muslim Ek Hai" at the end of his speech.

Reproduced below is a report from the National Herald of 8 November 1946 on Gandhiji's tour of Noakhali after terrible incidents of communal violence had occurred there.

MAHATMA GANDHI and party, who left for Noakhali this morning, arrived at Chandpur by a special steamer arranged by the Government of Bengal. Addressing a fairly large crowd that had gathered at Goalundo ghat, from the deck of the steamer, Mahatma Gandhi said that he would like to visit every affected village in Noakhali if he could possibly do so he was going to Noakhali to console the victims of the riot, to wipe the tears of the oppressed.

If they thought in terms of revenge and kept up quarrelling, Hinduism and Islam would both ultimately be destroyed. No religion, he said, sanctioned what was reported to have happened in Bihar, and, if anybody thought that Bihar had done the fine thing by way of teaching the Muslims a "lesson" he was greatly mistaken; such talk was sheer folly....

The reins of the Government were in the hands of the 14 members of the Central Government, but if they had to suppress the riots with the aid of the military, the reins would pass into the hands of Lord Wavell, the Viceroy. The speaker could never tolerate that.

If a population of one thousand Muslims attacked the members of the minority community living in its midst, and if they looted their homes, molested their women and tried to convert them forcibly, they thereby stabbed their own religion. He was not going to leave Bengal till the Hindus and Muslims had told him that his presence in Bengal was no longer necessary. There was, of course the call of Bihar, but Pandit Nehru had assured him that his presence was not required there at present. Gandhiji's train halted also at Naihati, Ranaghat and Ghuadanga, where people assembled for darshan....

At Kusthia, addressing the waiting crowd, Gandhiji said that his object in going to Noakhali was not to take sides and promote mutual quarrelling. From his early life his object had been to settle quarrels but never to encourage it. The reports of the happenings in Noakhali had moved him. There might have been exaggerations, but some undesirable things had taken place there, and he wanted to go and see things for himself. Bengal was well known to him. He had toured all over Bengal, including East Bengal, with the late Ali brothers.

Those were the days when they had Hindu-Muslim unity. Large numbers of Muslims joined the Congress. The Congress then belonged to all. But today he was not going to East Bengal as a Congressman. He was going there as a servant of God. If he could wipe away the tears of outraged women, he would be more than satisfied.

Another freedom fighter who used journalism to spread his political message was J. B. Kripalani

The following are excerpts from the speech of Acharya Kripalani, the President of the Congress, at the AICC meeting in Delhi on 14-15 June 1947. THE HINDU and Moslem communities have vied with each other in the worst orgies of violence.... I have seen a well where women with their children, 107 in all, threw themselves to save their honour.

In another place of worship, fifty young women were killed by their menfolk for the same reason. I have seen heaps of bones in a house where 307 persons, mainly women and children, were driven, locked up and then burnt alive by the invading mob.

These ghastly experiences have no doubt affected my approach to the question. Some members have accused us that we have taken this decision [about Partition] out of fear, I must admit the truth of this charge, but not in the sense in which it is made. The fear is not for the lives lost, or of the widow's wail, or the orphans' cry, or of the many houses burned.

The fear is that if we go on like this, retaliating and heaping indignities on each other, we shall progressively reduce ourselves to a stage of cannibalism and worse. In every fresh communal fight the most brutal and degraded acts of the previous fight become the norm....

The excerpts given below are from a letter sent by Jawaharlal Nehru on 22 June 1947 to Lord Mountbatten on the sufferings of the people of Punjab. Dear Lord Mountbatten, You have not returned from Kashmir yet and are due back tomorrow. I am however, writing this to you rather late at night because I am distressed and the sending of this letter will perhaps give some relief to my mind.

I am writing about what is happening in Lahore and to some extent in Amristar. Yesterday, I went with Gandhiji to Hardwar and visited the numerous refugee camps there. There were, till yesterday, about 32,000 refugees there from the Frontier Province and the Punjab. Most of them were from the Frontier Province. Daily some 200 or so fresh arrivals came there. Apart from these refugee camps in Hardwar, there are similar large camp at half a dozen other places, some in the U.P. and some in the Indian States like Patiala, Alwar etc. The condition of many of these peopleis pitiable although many relieflocal governments are trying to help them.

But this letter is mainly about the city of Lahore where fires are raging and consuming hundreds of houses. It is reported that 100 houses were burnt down last night and this morning. During the previous two days about 250 houses were set fire to and burnt. At this rate the city of Lahore will be just a heap of ashes in a few days' time. The human aspect of this is appalling to contemplate. Amritsar is already a city of ruins, and Lahore is likely to be in a such worse state very soon.

If you will forgive a personal touch. I should like to tell you that my mother came from Lahore and part of my childhood was spent there. The fate of Lahore, therefore, affects me perhaps more intimately than it might many other people who are not connected with that city. Apart from newspaper reports, people have come from Lahore to see me today and they have given descriptions of what is happening there.

Whether their accounts are correct or not, I cannot say, they tell me that repeatedly when houses were set fire to, the residents of those houses rushed out into the streets and lanes and these people were fired at by the police for breach of the curfew order. Most of these fires occurred at the time of the curfew. I am told that the District Magistrate has ordered that people should keep open the doors of their houses and lanes so as to allow refugees from burning houses to enter other houses, because if they remain in the streets during curfew hours, they will be fired at by the police.

This is very strange state of affairs and few persons would like to be residents of Lahore at present.... All manner of charges are made against the police of committing arson and of preventing people from putting out fires and firing at them when they try to do so.

It is not possible for me to know the truth of these charges; but the fact remains that there is this strongly-felt feeling about the police and further that the situation continues to deteriorate. Are we to be passive spectators while a great city ceases to exist and hundreds of thousands of its inhabitants are reduced to becoming homeless wanderers, or else to die in their narrow lanes?

From all accounts that I have received, the statement of June 3rd has had a sobering and calming effect in most places. Whether people like the decisions or not, they accept them and have a general feeling that a settlement has been arrived at. The old tension is gone or is much less. There is no more talk, as there used to be of civil war and the like.

But this does not apply to Lahore, and already several hundred villages have been burnt down. The damage has been done and,

I suppose, sooner or later the trouble there will end, though it is still continuing to some extent. Lahore is an even more serious matter, not only because it affects a very large number of persons and valuable property, but also because it is the nerve-centre of the Punjab. There appears to be a deliberate policy being pursued there of smoking out people. It is an astonishingly foolish policy from any point of view and can do no good to anybody. Nevertheless it has succeeded in a large measure, and if it is continued on this scale for another ten days or so, there will be little left in the city of Lahore to save. If anything has got to be done, it must be done immediately....

Please forgive me for this long letter which you will get on your return from Kashmir. I tried to stop myself writing it, but the thought of Lahore burning away obsessed me and I could not restrain myself. The excerpts given below are from H.V. Hodson's book, The Great Divide, which depicts a gruesome picture of the near-civil-war situation on the eve of Partition. Although there were serious communal disorders in many parts of northern India in the interval before the transfer of power, including a number of violent incidents in Calcutta, in which rioters sometimes used steno guns, by far the worst and most menacing for the future were in the Punjab. In Gurgaon, close to Delhi, the situation was already grave when the [3 June, 1947] plan was announced.... Fighting proceeded on a fifty-mile front, and village after village was burnt by the rival communities;...

Meanwhile trouble was worsening rapidly in Lahore and Amritsar. Instead of mass riots, individual cases of arson and stabbing developed on a large scale. These were extremely difficult to combat in the conditions of an Indian city, either by the police, or still more, by the military. On 23rd June Mr. Jinnah begged the Viceroy to be absolutely ruthless in suppressing disorder in Amritsar and Lahore. He said: 'I don't care whether you shoot Muslims or not. it has got to be stopped'. The next day Pandit Nehru came and spoke in a similar strain. He suggested turning over the cities to the military, with drawing the police who were being accused of communal partiality' and declaring martial law. The Governor, Sir Evan Jenkins, to whom the proposal was referred, opposed this...

Discussion of these opinions in the Cabinet evoked a violent attack on all British officers, from the Governor downwards. Sardar Patel said bitingly that the British had little difficulty in maintaining law and order when it was a question of putting down Indian freedom movements. 'It was a case, 'he said,' of the British covering up for the British' The Governor-General called him to order and he apologised. The Muslim League members were equally vehement, saying that there would be no Lahore left for them to inherit....

On 6th August, at its last meeting the Partition Council took up the question of refugees, of whom there were by then very large numbers not only in the Punjab but also in Bihar, Bengal, and the North-West Frontier Province... A great and painful exchange of populations, driven by fear, was already under way. General Rees reported that when he took over communal bitterness was at a peak, and the masses were egged on and inflamed by shock-troops of resolute and well-armed men determined to fight... Throughout, the killing was premedieval in its ferocity. Neither age nor sex was spared; mothers with babies in their arms were cut down, speared or shot...

7

Revolutionary Terrorism

There were four factors behind the success of the freedom movement in British India: (1) ''legitimate'' pressure exerted by public bodies, (2) non-violent resistance campaigns, (3) violent resistance, and (4) global political and economic changes. Most histories of the freedom movement highlight the second and first factors, give an inadequate account of the third and all but ignore the fourth. The movement generally is shown to begin with the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. For the next thirty-five years resolutions passed at Congress sessions define its direction. In 1920 Mohandas K. Gandhi emerges as the hero of the non-cooperation movement. The historiographical limelight is trained on his satyagraha campaigns; the terrorist campaigns that precede and follow them fall into the shadow. The impact of global events becomes too obvious to ignore after 1939. From this point attention is focused on constitutional negotiations and on the Pakistan movement.

Many accounts of the freedom movement-especially those published in India-do include treatments of militant revolutionary resistance to British rule. Some of them make dubious linkages between eighteenth-and nineteenth-century peasant insurgency or the Revolt of 1857 and the organized anti-colonial militancy of the twentieth century. Coverage of the terrorist campaigns of 1907 to 1934 focuses largely on personalities. The standard approach until recently was commemorative: the verbal equivalent of statues and shahid minars. Treated in isolation from political developments, anti-British terrorism ends up looking like a heroic but futile display of pyrotechnics.

In the present paper I will attempt to look a little below the surface while presenting an account of the genesis, structure and activities of revolutionary terrorist societies that will serve the needs of non-specialist readers. I give most of my attention to the formative period (1902-1910), but also survey developments up to the mid-1930s and after. Terrorism in British India was largely a Bengali phenomenon. Concentrating on activities in undivided Bengal, I will look also at related events in other parts of the country.

VIOLENT RESISTANCE BEFORE 1900

Other sections of this volume deal with peasant uprisings and armed resistance during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Historians have counted more than a hundred instances of peasant insurgency during the British period. The better known ones-the Sannyasi Rebellion of northern Bengal (late eighteenth century), the Bakarganj insurgency and Sylhet uprising (both 1790s), the "pagal rebellion" in Sherpur (1820s-30s), the Indigo Rebellion (1859-60), and the well-organized Pabna uprising (1870s)-partook in some measure of the nature of violent revolution. But none of these could be considered politically conscious attempts to throw off foreign rule. In each case the grievances were local, generally related to rent. The Indigo Rebellion, famous mostly because it caught the imagination of the Calcutta intelligentsia, was a labour movement that sometimes turned violent rather than a political rebellion. The leader of the Sylhet uprising did declare that he wanted to drive out the foreign rulers, but his motives, when not rent-related, were religious, as were those of the leaders of the nineteenth-century Wahabi and Faraidi Movements.

Bengal was generally quiet during the Great Revolt of 1857 8; though, as Ratan Lal Chakraborty shows in this volume, there was some sympathy with the revolting soldiers, and minor outbreaks in Chittagong, Dhaka and other places. By the end of the nineteenth century the government of the Raj was firmly established in all parts of the Bengal Presidency. The educated Bengali Babu gobbled up a large share of available subordinate posts not only in his home province but throughout British India. And the Bengali Babu, as Macaulay declared, was the least warlike

of all men: "feeble even to effeminacy". Of all the "races" of India none was less "martial" than the Bengali.

This stereotyping had another side. The same Bengali Babu, British observers complained, had a knack for giving speeches and forming public bodies. In 1876 the Indian Association was founded in Calcutta. Its leader, Surendranath Banerjea, became the mouthpiece of an informal constituency of students and middle-class gentlemen. The Association sponsored the Indian National Conference (1883, 1885), which later merged with the Indian National Congress. The political life of the country was off to a slow start.

Some of the same students that attended the meetings of these associations also formed themselves into so-called secret societies dedicated to the cultivation of physical strength and "national" feeling. According to Bipin Chandra Pal such clubs "almost honeycombed" the Calcutta student community of the 1870s. A group to which the young Rabindranath Tagore belonged is often held up as an example, but this clearly had more to do with cloak-and-dagger romance than politics or revolution. While such groups were not, as sometimes is claimed, the origin of the later revolutionary samitis, they did mark a beginning of interest in physical improvement and proto-national spirit among young Bengalis. This spirit was amplified by the writings of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, and later by the speeches of Swami Vivekananda. The docile Bengali had begun to take the lead in verbal opposition to the British bureaucracy.

The lead in militant opposition was taken by Maharashtra. In the 1870s Wasudeo Balwant Phadke headed a poorly organized armed revolt whose aim was to free the country from the foreign enemies of Hinduism. Twenty-five years after this quixotic rebel was transported, the Chapekar brothers, like Phadke Chitpavan Brahmins of Poona, started a club similar in form to the "secret societies" of Bengal, but more businesslike both in the physical training provided and the anti-British sentiment cultivated. During the epidemic of 1897 the brothers decided that W. C. Rand, the chairman of the city's plague commission, had "made himself an enemy of our religion" by his vigorous but insensitive policies. In June 1897 they shot and killed him and another Briton, C. E.

Ayerst. This assassination, for which the brothers were executed, might be called semi-political. They were inspired, at least in part, by the writings of Congress leader B. G. Tilak. But more important motivating factors were personal resentment and religious enthusiasm.

THE START OF "MODERN" REVOLUTIONARY TERRORISM IN BENGAL

Scholars distinguish two sorts of violent opposition to constituted authority: "traditional" and "modern". The first is "pre-political", issuing from the peasantry in reaction to specific grievances. The second, originated by the urban upper classes, has a conscious political ideology. The rural uprisings of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Bengal are classic cases of traditional violence. In the Chapekars one can see the beginnings of political self-consciousness, but it is overshadowed by religious concerns and actuated by personal grievances. Organized violence of the modern type first emerged in Bengal around the turn of the century.

Calcutta was at this time both the capital of British India and its most vocal centre of nationalist politics. But it should be remembered that this "politics" was simply organized public opinion, there being no responsible bodies in which Indians held a share of power. Articles in the newspapers, resolutions at Congress sessions, motions in the legislative assemblies: these were the boundary-stones of the political life of the country. Within this limited terrain, men like Banerjea and Motilal Ghose put their stamp on the educated public of Bengal. Pherozshah Mehta similarly held sway over Bombay, while Poona divided its allegiance between the cautious G. K. Gokhale and the more impetuous Tilak. A few other leaders in a few other towns completed the picture.

One of the first voices to be raised against the inbred and inactive world of Indian politics was that of Aurobindo Ghose. In 1893, just returned from England, he wrote: "the Congress, which represents not the mass of the population, but a single and very limited class, could not honestly be called national." Not surprisingly the young man was asked to tone down his criticisms.

He preferred to drop political journalism for a decade. Aurobindo came to believe that India's real need was a militant revolutionary movement, like the American, French and Irish movements he had studied in England. Around 1902 he made contact with men with similar views in Western India, where he was then living, and helped a young Bengali named Jatindranath Banerjee to get military training in the army of the Maharaja of Baroda. Around 1902 Banerjee went to Calcutta to try to interest young men in physical training and revolutionary propaganda. At this time a few clubs or samitis were still active in the city. Perhaps the best known of them was directed by Sarala Devi Ghosal, a granddaughter of Debendranath Tagore. Another, the Anushilan Samiti, was founded early in 1902 by Satish Chandra Bose. Satish soon found a sponsor in Pramathanath Mitra, a high court barrister. Shortly after he got started on his own, Jatin Banerjee came in contact with Sarala Devi and P. Mitra, who put him in touch with Satish. In March 1902 Jatin's and Satish's groups became amalgamated under the name already chosen by Satish.

For several years after its founding, the Anushilan Samiti, as well as other Calcutta groups, made little impact. A small number of youths were recruited in the capital and mofussil, who took part in some rather innocuous activities. In 1903 Aurobindo sent his brother Barindra Kumar to help Jatin out. The two young men soon quarrelled and Barin went back to Gujarat. The movement might then have died a natural death had not political events intervened. In 1905 the government announced that it was going ahead with its controversial plan to partition Bengal. Unprecedented popular resistance gave birth to the swadeshi-boycott movement. Huge protest meetings were held in every part of the province. Groups of "volunteers" were organized to enforce the boycott. This helped give it a brief effectiveness, but tended to alienate Muslims, who had less reason than Hindus to oppose the new arrangement.

The agitation and excitement that found an outlet in the swadeshi movement also encouraged more radical approaches. Speakers and writers like Bipin Chandra Pal and Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya shot to prominence as the spokesmen of the fast-growing faction that believed that Surendranath Banerjea and his

Congress allies were not aggressive enough. By the end of 1905 these men began speaking of themselves as the New Party. Their rivals, whom they called Moderates, labelled them Extremists.

From the start Extremist politicians and revolutionary samitis had a symbiotic relationship. The young men received material support and legitimisation from the leaders. In return they served as the leaders' power base and strong right arm. The leaders' prestige and eloquence did much to get the samitis going. In November 1905 Bipin Chandra and P. Mitra visited Dhaka and called for volunteers ready to sacrifice their all for the motherland. Among the eighty who stepped forward was a Wari resident named Pulin Bihari Das.

He was appointed head of what grew to be the most active centre of the Anushilan Samiti. Under his leadership it "spread like wildfire" throughout the province. More than 500 branches were opened, linked by a "close and detailed organization" to Pulin's headquarters. The Dacca Anushilan "soon overshadowed its parent society" and absorbed many smaller groups, especially in East Bengal. Within two years of its founding it had lost whatever interest it might have had in the swadeshi movement, and become one of Bengal's two main terrorist organisations.

The other group, more of a federation than a centralised organisation, took shape anonymously during these years. Its origins are linked with those of the newspaper that eventually gave it its name: Jugantar. Early in 1906 Aurobindo Ghose quit his post in Baroda and came to Calcutta. His brother Barin arrived around the same time. Aurobindo's first task was to help set up the new Bengal National College.

He also helped Barin and others start a newspaper that would put a frankly revolutionary programme before the country. The first issue of Jugantar came out in March. After an initial slow period, it caught on. Young Bengalis thrilled to read its call to arms: "Would not the disappearance of fifty million men in an attempt to deliver India be a hundred times better than this impotent death under the grim shelter of peace.... If you cannot be a man in life be one in death. The foreigner has come and fixed the way in which you live, but how you die depends entirely on yourself."

At the same time Barin was trying to pick up the pieces of the Calcutta Anushilan Samiti, which had broken apart as a result of his clash with Jatindranath Banerjee a year or two earlier. The general feeling of excitement created by the swadeshi movement, augmented by the revolutionary message of the Jugantar, made it easier to recruit young men and instil them with revolutionary feeling. A cluster of groups that got their start at this time later became linked with others under the name of the journal that had been their inspiration.

In the summer of 1906, Barin, tiring of his editorial duties, accepted the offer of one of the Calcutta backers of his samiti to finance an assassination attempt. The chosen target was Bampfylde Fuller, the lieutenant-governor of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Fuller had made himself unpopular among Bengali Hindus by his attempts to repress the swadeshi movement and by his declared preference for Muslims. Barin and Hem Chandra Das, a recruit from Midnapore, trailed Fuller from Gauhati to Barisal to Rangpur without making an attempt. In the last place Barin planned a dacoity to get needed funds, but aborted it when he heard the police were in the neighbourhood. These two planned "actions" were probably the first of their kind in Bengal, the precursors of dozens of attempted or successful political assassinations and hundreds of dacoities for claimed political purposes. They thus may be said to mark the beginning of active terrorism in Bengal. Their amateurishness and failure make them typical of actions undertaken by Barin Ghose and his comrades.

In 1907 Barin and Hem Chandra attempted in different ways to get more professional. Hem went to Paris where for some time he studied revolutionary politics and bomb-making with anarchists living in that city, some of whom were Russian. Barin turned a garden house his family owned in Maniktala, suburban Calcutta, into a revolutionary school and small-time arsenal. It was from here that he organized his first serious revolutionary actions: attempts to derail the train carrying the lieutenant-governor of Bengal in November and December 1907, and attempts to assassinate Douglas Kingsford, magistrate of Calcutta and later district judge of Muzaffarpur, in January and April 1908. The Muzaffarpur action, carried out by Khudiram Bose and Prafulla

Chaki, is one of the most famous events in the annals of Bengali terrorism. Like all other actions planned by Barin, it was a failure. Two innocent English ladies were killed instead of Kingsford. This "outrage" brought the existence of terrorism more prominently before the public than two successful attempts carried out in December 1907 by other samitis: a dacoity in Chingripota (24-Parganas), by a group led by Narendranath Bhattacharya, and the shooting of the district magistrate of Dhaka, B. C. Allen, by members of the Dacca Anushilan. Secretary of State John Morley claimed to be not surprised when he heard of the Allen shooting. "It has long been evident", he wrote to the Viceroy Lord Minto, "that Indian antagonism to Government would run slowly into the usual grooves, including assassination." From this point, terrorism of the modern type was part of the political scene in Bengal.

INFLUENCES AND IDEOLOGY

Morley's remark suggests that he considered Bengali terrorism to be an almost natural result of strong political discontent. Minto on the other hand considered it merely imitative. Writing to Morley after the Muzaffarpur attempt, Minto declared that the conspirators aimed "at the furtherance of murderous methods hitherto unknown in India which have been imported from the West, and which the imitative Bengali has childishly accepted". The idea is that the Bengali terrorists had no real ideology. Just as the members of the Congress were playing at being parliamentarians, so the terrorists were playing at being "anarchists".

There were to be sure some foreign influences on Bengali terrorism. We have already mentioned Aurobindo Ghose's study of the revolutionary movements of Ireland, France and America. Members of early "secret societies" drew some of their inspiration from Mazzini and also read books like Thomas Frost's Secret Societies of the European Revolution. Two non-Indians influenced the Calcutta circles from which the revolutionary samitis emerged around 1902. The Japanese critic Kakuzo Okakura inspired Pramathanath Mitra and others with revolutionary and pan-Asiatic ideas just when the samiti movement was getting started. The Irishwoman Margaret Noble, known as Sister Nivedita after she

became a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, had some contact with Aurobindo Ghose and with younger men like Satish Bose and Jugantar sub-editor Bhupendranath Bose.

Nivedita was in correspondence with the non-terroristic anarchist Peter Kropotkin and is known to have had revolutionary beliefs. She gave the young men a collection of books that included titles on revolutionary history and spoke to them about their duty to the motherland. She is even said on fairly good authority to have been an early leader of the "revolutionary party" before it turned to terrorism. Apart from these somewhat shadowy influences, there is the undoubted connection of Hem Chandra Das with European revolutionaries in Paris in 1907. In his memoirs Hem explains that he was ignorant of and uninterested in the many varieties of radical politics he came in contact with. His real interest was explosive chemistry. This he learned quite well, and brought an up-to-date explosives manual with him when he came back to India.

This technological debt may be said to have been the major foreign influence on Bengali terrorism. British officials portrayed the Indian movement as imitative because they did not believe that their political grievances were legitimate. As Minto wrote in 1908: "The public at home will make a fatal mistake if they ascribe outrages such as that at Mozufferpur to the efforts of a people struggling to relieve themselves from an oppressor." In this Minto certainly was wrong. The ideology of the revolutionary publicists: Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghose, and others, although formed in part from a study of European history, was an indigenous and natural response to British imperial domination. Their ideology had three major components: political independence or swaraj, economic independence as expressed in the swadeshi-boycott movement, and the drive for cultural independence by means of national education.

Only the first of these components was of direct interest to members of terrorist groups. A circular of the Anushilan Samiti states: "This Samiti has no open relationship with any kind of popular and outward Swadeshi; that is (the boycott of) belati articles, of cloths, salt, sugar, etc. To be mixed up in quarrels or disputes or implicated in the litigation about such affairs is entirely

against the principles of the Samiti." Members of Barin Ghose's group likewise stigmatised the swadeshi-boycott movement as "bania politics". The one thing that mattered was political independence. The only way to get it was the use of force.

Extremist political leaders differed over the question of force: Bipin Chandra Pal was opposed, Aurobindo in favour of its use. This was one of the reasons that Pal was ousted from the editorial board of Bande Mataram. Though Aurobindo's Doctrine of Passive Resistance (1907) was one of the first and remains one of the best articulations of the strategy that played a central role in the course of the freedom struggle, he "never concealed his opinion that a nation is entitled to attain its freedom by violence".

But what he had in mind when he encouraged Jatin Banerjee and Barin Ghose to organise samitis was a large-scale militant uprising prepared over the course of two or three decades. Impatience and the demands of financial backers pushed Barin and others towards the flashy results of terrorism. While not really in favour of assassination and dacoity, Aurobindo certainly was cognisant his brother's attempts, and thus at least tacitly approved of them. The question of violence versus non-violence would remain a live one throughout the history of the freedom struggle in Bengal.

There remains the problem of the place of religion in the ideology of the revolutionaries. Aurobindo, Bipin Chandra, Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya and other so-called "Hindu" publicists frequently used religious imagery in their writings and sometimes spoke of the movement as a "religion". As a result, contemporary British observers and later historians of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have accused them of mixing up politics and religion or even of promoting communalism.

For reasons too complex to go into here, the old cultural divide between the Hindus and Muslims of Bengal began to become politicised during the anti-partition agitation. Swadeshi volunteers and Muslim activists found themselves on opposite sides and a mutual distrust was born. Pamphleteers and journalists indulged in provocative rhetoric. Serious communal riots broke out in Comilla, Mymensingh and other places in 1907. Calls for self-defence became mingled with cries for revenge.

In the midst of this degenerating situation the "religion of patriotism" preached by Aurobindo and Bipin Chandra, sometimes using the language of popular religion, may have helped the movement towards polarisation. But both Aurobindo and Bipin Chandra considered Muslims as much a part of the Indian nation-in-the-making as Hindus. Both called for the increased participation of Muslims in the national movement and regretted attempts to drive the two communities apart. Both men felt however that separate Muslim representation in legislative councils, introduced by the Morley-Minto reforms of 1910, would have a disastrous effect on the integrity of the movement-as indeed it did.

Communal thinking had no part in the ideology of the major publicists of revolution in Bengal. But it certainly entered in at a lower level. Some samiti members came to regard pro-partition Muslims as their enemies. Samiti members as well as Muslim activists took part in communal riots. Few Muslims became members of the revolutionary party. They were barred from membership in the Dacca Anushilan, though samiti members were forbidden in principle "to show hostile feelings against, or to deal unjustly with the Musulmans as a nation". The antagonism between the two communities unquestionably weakened the movement. For example, it prevented East Bengal samitis from gaining needed support from the Muslim peasantry. All this served the interests of the government; but while the British may have in some cases exacerbated the communal division, they certainly did not create it.

STRUCTURE OF THE TERRORIST SOCIETIES

The two main terrorist associations, Anushilan and Jugantar, had different sorts of structure. Jugantar was a loosely organized alliance of groups run by different leaders who occasionally acted together. Anushilan was centrally organized, with a vertical hierarchy and rigid discipline. The two systems are probably best conceived as structural types to which the actual structure of any given samiti approximated more or less well.

The secret society started by Barin Ghose in 1907 in Maniktala may be taken as the precursor of the Jugantar-type organization. In theory it had a complex hierarchy based on the Russian model

as set forth in such books as Frost's Secret Societies. An actual organisational document shows a primary division between the two active leaders (Barin and Upendranath Bannerjee) and the rank-and-file. The higher leaders, including Aurobindo, were supposed to be known only to the active leaders. Each member was assigned to one or more of three circles: (1) collection of funds, (2) practical terrorist work, and (3) propaganda. In practice, the fundamental division was between "military" work (corresponding to the second circle) and "civil" work.

Members of the Maniktala and other groups often claimed that they were connected with a vast web of secret societies covering the whole of British India. In fact links between provinces were limited to contacts between a few individuals like Aurobindo, who had friends in West India. Within Bengal, the Maniktala society had links with other groups, such as the Anushilan and Atmannati Samitis, but relations were more often competitive than co-operative. There was also competition between groups in the Jugantar network, which took the place of the Maniktala society after its primary membership was jailed.

According to Leonard Gordon, in the period between 1910 and 1915 each group or dal in the Jugantar network was a separate unit composed of a leader, known as the dada, and his followers. As the name implies, the dada was the elder brother of the revolutionary family. He was also a guru, teaching his disciples practical skills, revolutionary ideology and strategy. Gordon believes that the dada system developed out of pre-existing social structures of rural Bengal. He suggests that their activities-political murder and dacoity-may have grown out of a tradition of zamindar-sponsored violence in the Bengal countryside. Dadas both co-operated and competed with the each other for men, money and material.

It is possible to give a more detailed account of Anushilan, since the regulations of the central Dhaka organization were written down and were reproduced or summarised in government reports. But it is likely that it was impossible in practice to impose the formal structure on all the branches. According to one estimate, the Dacca Anushilan Samiti had at one point 20,000 members in 500 branches. Most branches were located in the eastern districts

of Bengal. At a later stage branches were opened in the western districts, Bihar, and the United Provinces. There also were shelters for absconders in Assam and two farms in Tripura.

An internal circular of circa 1908, probably written by Pulin Behari Das, notes that "it has become particularly necessary... to make some good arrangements for the present by dividing the whole of Bengal into divisions and sub-divisions and forming Central Samitis with a few small Samitis." The whole structure, which largely followed British administrative divisions, required placing "the right person in charge of the right place and the right mission, in order to carry out in a thorough manner the entire work in an orderly way being bound by the tie of union." Dals consisting of five or ten members led by a dalpati were grouped together in local samitis led by adhyakshas and other officers. These reported to district officers appointed by and responsible to the central Dhaka organization. This was commanded by Pulin Das and those who succeeded him during his periods of imprisonment. Samitis were divided into four functional groups: violence, organisation, keepers of arms, householder department. Communications were by special couriers and were written in secret code. This practice and many others were taken from literary sources and were in part a concession to the young men's need to act out romantic drama.

COMPOSITION OF THE TERRORIST SOCIETIES

During the period under study as well as later, the Bengali terrorist societies were composed almost entirely of young urban Hindu men of the upper classes. In the beginning there were no active woman members; indeed women were specifically excluded from the samitis, many of which required recruits to abandon relations with the opposite sex. After 1924 some groups opened their doors to women, and a few female groups were formed. A handful of young women, among them Pritilata Waddedar and Bina Das, took part in important actions. But for the most part terrorism was considered a man's work.

I have already spoken of the reasons for the Hindu exclusiveness. It was not absolute. The samitis had great respect for the nationalist Maulvi Liaquat Hussain (who, however, was

considered a turncoat by orthodox Muslims). Future Congress leader Abul Kalam Azad met Aurobindo Ghose "on two or three occasions" and "was attracted to revolutionary politics and joined one of the groups". There may not have been many other exceptions to the general rule. A good number of the "Hindu" terrorists were non-religious, particularly after 1920 when many young Bengalis abandoned the Hindu in favour of the Marxist world-view.

Most members of terrorist groups came from the Bengali bhadralok. Most, that is, belonged to the Brahmin, Baidya or Kayasth caste. Of the 36 men on whom judgement was passed in the Alipore Bomb Case (1909), all but two were from these castes. Of the 186 persons "convicted in Bengal of revolutionary crimes or killed in commission of such crimes during the years 1907-17", 89 per cent were Brahmin, Baidya or Kayasth and 9 per cent from lower Bengali castes. The same pattern continued through the thirties. The predominance of higher classes is typical of urban revolutionary groups everywhere. Attempts have been made to provide political or economic explanations for the bhadralok lead in Bengali revolutionary groups. The British spoke of the movement as a bhadralok conspiracy motivated by the class's diminishing employment opportunities. Some modern historians have suggested that the movement was in part an attempt of the bhadralok élite to maintain its predominance over the masses. But it is hard to see how bhadralok individuals furthered their interests by stepping off the educational-employment treadmill and exposing themselves to imprisonment and death. One is no longer obliged to accept uncritically the notion that abstract entities called "classes" have concrete interests.

As shown by the passage cited above in the third section, Aurobindo was aware of the need of involving the masses in the movement as early as 1893. The Extremists broadened the base of participation without significantly altering the élite bias. Efforts were made by Anushilan and other terrorist groups to recruit lower caste Hindus, without notable success. The lack of peasant support, like the lack of Muslim support, was a factor that weakened the movement.

Like revolutionaries of all periods and places, most members of the Bengali terrorist groups were young, many of them mere

boys. The average age of the 36 Alipore convicts was 22. This sample may be divided into two groups: 6 leaders with an average age of 32, and 30 rank-and-file members with an average age of 20. Youth remained a constant factor throughout the terrorist movement.

ACTIVITIES OF THE TERRORIST SOCIETIES

The activities of the terrorist societies may be divided into two broad classes: (1) preliminary activities and (2) actual terrorist actions. Preliminary activities included recruitment, propaganda, training, cover activities, collection of arms, and collection of money. Most prospective members were recruited from schools and colleges. The various dals competed for recruits, dadas engaging in chele-dhara (boy-or disciple-snatching) when they got the chance. Many who joined the Maniktala group were students who found their way to the Jugantar office after reading the paper, whose influence on swadeshi-era Bengalis cannot be overemphasised. A selection of Jugantar articles, Mukti Kon Pathe? (Which Way Freedom?) was a big seller until banned by the police. Another daring publication of the group was Bartaman Rananiti, essentially a translation of Major Bloch's Modern Weapons and Modern War.

In its last chapter the Bengali writer took up the question, "How can a weak and disarmed nation fight against armed and trained soldiers?" He answered that nothing was impossible if the people were determined to attain liberty even at the cost of death. When conditions were right native troops would desert, the hill tribes rise and young men engage in irregular warfare. All this together with pressure from abroad would eventually wear the enemy down. The effectiveness of such propaganda led the Maniktala group to devote much of its time and resources to its publication and distribution. The Dacca Anushilan seems to have relied on material from Calcutta for promotion and indoctrination.

Recruits accepted into the two organisations had to take elaborate oaths of initiation and secrecy. These were in the form of religious rituals. Physical training-exercises, lathi-play, bicycling, etc.-was a major preoccupation of new recruits. These activities helped establish the samitis' cover and taught useful skills. The

lessons in boat-handling given by Anushilan dals came in handy when the boys took part in dacoities in the riparian districts. Trainees also spent a good amount of time studying revolutionary and religious literature. The garden-house headquarters of the Maniktala society was set up as a regular school, with a peculiar syllabus. According to fifteen year old Krishna Jiban Sanyal, "in the garden Upen Babu used to teach us Upanishads and politics and Barindra Babu [taught] Gita and History of Russo-Japanese War and Ullas Babu delivered lectures on explosives on two occasions".

In principle recruits were not initiated into the "military side" of the organization until they proved themselves. In practice they were not kept in the dark very long. Barin and the other Maniktala leaders were lax about security and the group was easily penetrated by police agents.

The more disciplined Anushilan organization had a strict screening process for keeping out security risks. Citing internal documents, P. K. Ghose stresses that Anushilan members were also vetted for "unimpeachable moral character". Against this must be weighed persistent reports in British sources that some older Anushilan members drew younger ones into pederastic relations. No such doubts exist about the moral example provided by Jugantar leaders like Jatindranath Mukherjee, universally admired as a man without meanness, ambition or fear.

Besides education, the primary ostensible aim of the samitis was social service. Aswini Kumar Dutt's "Little Brothers of the Poor" built up a lofty reputation for service in the rural districts. Such groups were unconnected with terrorism but provided a model of organization and action that terrorist groups drew upon. The stated aims of the original Anushilan Samiti included social service, and the claims were not altogether false.

Members did invaluable volunteer work-during the Damodar flood for example-and helped manage public events, such as political rallies and melas. British observers were struck to see how efficiently the young Bengalis did their work, but did not fail to note that the uniforms and badges they wore and the lathis they sometimes carried lent a military air to the operation. As time went on, such activities became mere covers and training grounds for terrorist activities.

The Arms Act of 1878 made it illegal for most natives of British India to own guns, swords and other weapons. The possession of contraband arms became important in terrorist rites of passage as well as indispensable for terrorist actions. Firearms were obtained by two methods: misuse of legal channels and theft.

French Chandernagore, where the Arms Act did not apply, was the principle centre for the import of guns and pistols into Bengal if not the whole of India. Individual weapons were obtained from persons with exemptions, like zamindars, members of the nobility, and civil servants. The most famous arms-acquisition in the history of the movement was the theft of 50 Mauser automatic pistols and 46,000 rounds of ammunition from a Calcutta import house in 1914. This kept a dozen groups supplied with up-to-date weapons for several years.

Terrorist bombs were introduced to India by the Maniktala society. The early experiments of self-trained chemists like Ullaskar Dutt were soon replaced by professional devices manufactured by Hem Chandra Das and others. The literature on the making of explosives that Hem brought back from Europe was widely disseminated. At one point copies were sent anonymously to students of dozens of district schools. Even the passage of the Explosives Act in 1908 did not prevent terrorists from gaining enough knowledge of chemistry to put together sophisticated bombs.

According to the German anarchist Johann Most, "in money-even more than in dynamite-the key was to be found." It costs a lot of money to purchase firearms and chemicals, and to print and distribute propaganda. It may cost even more to house and feed a couple of dozen adolescents.

A document of 1908 lists three ways to obtain needed funds: (a) profit-making enterprises, (b) contributions from men of wealth, (3) "imposing taxes on rich people with the aid of the terroristic department", i.e. armed robbery. The third method was by far the most popular. The majority of terrorist actions in Bengal were

dacoities, the victims of which almost invariably were rich Indians. Needless to say, they regarded the revolutionary dacoits as dacoits, and were not amused by talk of "taxes" or by documents like the following, left behind after a Calcutta robbery: "Six honorary officers of our Calcutta Finance Department have taken a loan of Rs 9,891-1-5 from you and have deposited the amount in the office noted above on your account to fulfil our great aim". The victim doubtless took the promise of repayment with interest less seriously than the threat that if he co-operated with the police the Finance Department would "not leave any one in your family to enjoy your enormous wealth".

The government claimed that once the movement got started it gave birth to a "bhadralok loafer criminal class and an anarchical condition of things in which, although the revolutionary idea existed, there was undoubtedly a very big element of ordinary crime". This is supported to some extent by statements made by Barin Ghose and Hem Chandra Das. In this connection Leonard Gordon comments that many violent acts committed by Bengali revolutionaries after 1910 "were often only vaguely related to the goals of India's independence".

Assassination-attempts certainly had political significance. It is remarkable, however, that Bengali terrorists rarely succeeded in killing British officials, though they rarely failed to kill Bengalis suspected of collaborating with the enemy or failing in their duties to the samitis. The Bengali press condemned both types of murders, but public expressions of sympathy for assassins like Khudiram Bose and Kanailal Dutt showed that the people did not necessarily condemn the murder of Britons or obvious traitors.

Generally speaking, Bengali terrorists were not terribly effective, particularly during the period we have studied thus far.

In later years both the frequency and the success ratio went up. In 1915, for example, 49 "revolutionary outrages"-39 dacoities and 10 murders-were attempted. Twenty-four of the dacoities were successful (in the sense that the dacoits escaped with some loot). The murder-attempts, all of which targeted Bengalis (government servants, policemen, etc.), were successful in all but two cases.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE TERRORIST MOVEMENT IN BENGAL AFTER 1910

I have given most of my attention to the activities and structure of the samitis of the formative period (1902-10) because my familiarity with the documents of these years has enabled me to deal with them in some depth. Events of subsequent years will be treated in more summary manner, without structural analysis. It may be said, however, that the basic patterns laid down during the formative period persisted throughout the four decades of freedom-movement-era terrorism in Bengal.

The immediate result of the first burst of revolutionary activity was a period of government repression during which the samitis were outlawed and many terrorists were imprisoned or deported. Those who were spared lay low for some time. During these years the Jugantar organization began to take shape, while the now-illegal Anushilan Samiti regrouped.

The imperial government's rescinding of the Partition of Bengal did not have the desired result of dampening violent revolution. When the Viceroy Lord Hardinge made his ceremonial entry into the new capital of Delhi in December 1912, Bengali terrorists came close to killing him in a well-planned bomb attack.

When war broke out in Europe the revolutionary parties decided to make the best use of the opportunity. Though small-scale terrorism continued, the more ambitious leaders tried to organise the sort of general insurrection that Aurobindo had looked forward to a decade earlier.

In 1914 Rash Behari Bose (the mastermind of the attempt on the Viceroy), along with the Maharashtrian Vishnu Ganesh Pinglay and some Sikh militants, planned simultaneous troop risings in different places in February 1915. Unfortunately for the plotters, the plan leaked out and the only rising that took place was quickly subdued. Other groups of revolutionaries made contact with the German Foreign Office and asked for money and arms.

They managed to get some funds, but the only significant attempt to smuggle weapons into the country ended in failure. A shipload of arms, purchased by a German agent in New York, was seized by United States authorities before it could leave that

country for India. Jugantar leader Jatindranath Mukherjee, waiting for the shipment in Orissa, was trapped by British police, and died fighting in September 1915.

Wartime terrorist and militant activity led to the passage of the Defence of India Act, which gave the government extraordinary powers to control "revolutionary crime". After the war these powers were extended by the so-called Rowlatt Acts, the passage of which was one of the goads that led to the launching of M. K. Gandhi's Non-Co-operation Movement.

During this first mass experiment in non-violent resistance, Jugantar agreed to the request of the country's other main political leader, Dhaka-born C. R. Das, to abstain from terrorist activities. Anushilan did not subscribe to the agreement but sponsored no major actions between 1920 and 1922, the year the Non-Co-operation Movement was suspended. After this, Jugantar again became active. Associated groups were set up in Chittagong and Dhaka, the first of which staged a daring robbery of the Chittagong office of the Assam-Bengal Railway in December 1923. Surya Sen, the group's leader, and two others were arrested but released. The next month Gopi Mohan Saha was arrested after killing a European whom he took to be Calcutta Police Commissioner Charles Tegart. The assassin was openly praised by the Bengali press and, to Gandhi's chagrin, proclaimed a martyr by the Bengal Provincial Congress. Around this time Jugantar became closely associated with the Calcutta Corporation, headed by C. R. Das and Subhas Chandra Bose. Bose apparently "met with active revolutionaries and knew in a general way what they planned to do". Terrorists and ex-terrorists would be factors in the Bengal local-government equation from this point on.

The activity and influence of the Bengal terrorists led to the passage in 1924 of the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance, extended as an Act the next year. This again gave the police extraordinary powers, and between 1924 and 1927 almost 200 suspects were imprisoned, among them Subhas Bose. Acts of terrorism in Bengal dropped off; but an Anushilan-linked group in the United Provinces grew to some importance. Founded in Benares in 1923 by Sachindranath Sanyal and Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, the Hindustan Republican Association (as it became known) soon had branches from Calcutta to Lahore. A series of successful dacoities in UP culminated in an ambitious train robbery in Kakori. This resulted in two trials that crippled the organization. The HRA did much to radicalise North India, however, and several years later was reborn as the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association.

In 1927 the Indian National Congress came out in favour of complete independence from Britain. The recognition of the goal that Aurobindo, Tilak and other Extremist politicians had put forward twenty years earlier was to some extent made possible by the pressure exerted by the militant revolutionary groups. Owing to the relative quietude of Bengal, the government released most of those interned under the Act of 1925. There was an attempt, ultimately unsuccessful, to forge a Jugantar-Anushilan alliance at this time. Some of the younger radicals struck out in new directions, while many, young and old, took part in Congress activities, such as the anti-Simon agitation of 1928. Congress leader Lala Lajpat Rai succumbed to wounds received when police broke up a Lahore protest-march in October. Bhagat Singh and other members of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association avenged his death in December. Later Bhagat Singh boldly threw a bomb into the Legislative Assembly. He and other HSRA members were arrested, and three of them attracted wide attention by going on a hunger strike in jail. Bengali bomb-maker Jatindra Nath Das persisted until his death in September 1929. The Calcutta Corporation passed a resolution of sorrow and condolence after his martyrdom, as did the Indian National Congress when Bhagat Singh was executed.

As the tempo of the national movement picked up during the early thirties, some former terrorists became influential Congressmen-for example, Jugantar leader Surendra Mohan Ghose-while many Bengal Congressmen maintained links with terrorist organisations. In January 1930 Congress celebrated "Independence Day" for the first time, and in the months that followed, important steps were taken to make independence a reality. In March Gandhi inaugurated the Civil Disobedience Movement with his Salt March; in April Surya Sen and his associates raided the Chittagong Armoury.

The four-year course of the Civil Disobedience Movement corresponded with the most vehement period of revolutionary terrorism in Bengal. During 1930 alone eleven British officials were killed, notably during the Writer's Building raid of December. Three successive District Magistrates of Midnapore were assassinated and dozens of other successful actions were carried out during the first half of the decade. But this was a last flare-up before the fire was extinguished. The terrorist movement in Bengal may be said to have ended in 1934.

During the twenties and thirties, many Bengali terrorists converted to Communism or other Left parties. Former Jugantar leader Narendranath Bhattacharya, now known as M. N. Roy, became an influential member of the Communist International and helped found the Communist Party of India. Many members of Jugantar, Anushilan and other groups were won over to the party, particularly during the mass-detentions of the 1930s. By the end of that decade a whole menagerie of left-wing parties were competing for the youth of the province. Most of these groups were opposed in principle to terrorism, aiming instead at broad-based class warfare.

Numerous terrorists who did not join Left parties became members of Congress. When Jugantar was formally dissolved in 1938, many former members continued to act together under Surendra Mohan Ghose, who acted as a liaison between other Congress politicians and Aurobindo Ghose in Pondicherry. The ascendancy of the Congress left-wing was demonstrated by Subhas Chandra Bose's election as president in 1938 and again in 1939. His defeat of Gandhi's candidate in the second election angered the Congress Working Committee, who forced him to resign. In April he formed the Forward Bloc as an "organized and disciplined Left Wing... to fight the Gandhi wing". Placed under house arrest in 1940, Bose escaped to Europe, met Mussolini and Hitler, and eventually became the leader of the Indian National Army in Southeast Asia. The INA's military campaign was a failure, but the trial of its officers in Delhi electrified the country at a critical moment. Their acquittal amounted to a recognition by the court that a revolt by a disciplined army under a provisional government was not treason. A few months later, the revolt of the naval ratings

in Bombay convinced the British that the loyalty of the armed forces could no longer be taken for granted. The next day the government announced the sending of the Cabinet Mission.

Throughout the freedom struggle, acts of violent revolt forced the government to parley more seriously with the leaders of the legitimate movement. Gandhi was always aware of this. At the Round Table Conference of 1931, the apostle of non-violence declared that he held "no brief for the terrorists", but added that if the government refused to work with him, it would have the terrorists to deal with. The only way to "say good-bye to terrorism" was "to work the Congress for all it is worth". Little as they liked the Mahatma, the government followed his advice. He offered them a better way out of what had become an imperial mess than a prolonged battle with the forces of violent revolution.

CONCLUSIONS

The indirect pressure exerted by the terrorists on the freedom movement was their primary contribution to its success. Another was to show that freedom was something worth dying for. The martyrdom of Khudiram Bose, Surya Sen and Jatindra Nath Das was a powerful influence on the mentality of the generations that came of age between 1908 and 1938. Despite all this, it would be hard to pronounce terrorists' work a success in itself. Few dacoities netted substantial sums. Most British targets escaped their bullets and bombs. Bengali terrorists were better at murdering other Bengalis, but many of these assassinations, as well as other actions, had little direct connection with the national movement. As the criminal element became stronger, more and more groups engaged in acts of gratuitous violence. Acts that appear justifiable, like the killing of collaborators and informers, were sometimes carried out with unnecessary brutality.

The Anushilan Samiti decapitated or mutilated the bodies of some of its victims. The movement's narrow base limited its effectiveness, and may have exacerbated the divisions in Bengali society. Few Muslims and lower-caste men were members; few gave even passive support to the samitis. This, and the samitis' own divisiveness, helped the government keep terrorism from becoming a genuine threat to its rule.

In the long term, one of the most significant results of the terrorist movement was to establish violent opposition as part of the socio-political idiom of post-independence Bengal. It is no coincidence that India's most celebrated movement of Communist insurgency got its start in the West Bengal subdivision of Naxalbari. The state's Left parties, their ranks swelled by former terrorists, sponsored many violent strikes and demonstrations from the late forties into the seventies. Writing around the time of the Left's rise to power in 1977 (after which the situation changed), a Western social scientist could observe: ''There can be little serious doubt that violence is perceived to be an acceptable strategy to almost all political parties in West Bengal.'' Even the violent resistance that helped create Bangladesh may be said to descend in part from the pre-1947 revolutionary terrorist movement of undivided Bengal.

8

WC Banerjee

INDIA'S STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

The heroic struggle waged by the people of India to liberate themselves from foreign rule was the result of the rise and growth of Indian nationalism. Indian nationalism took birth in the nineteenth century as a result of the conditions created by British rule. British rule was intended only to serve the interests of the ruling classes of Britain. This was the cause of the fundamental antagonism between the British government and the Indian people.

The rise of nationalism marks a definite stage in the development of human societies everywhere in the world. The British conquest had disrupted the evolution of Indian society through internal processes. Nationalism, therefore, arose in India, as in other countries which were victims of imperialist conquest, under conditions created by foreign rule. With the growth of nationalism, the demands of the Indian people assumed as increasingly nationalist character. Beginning with the demand to have a share in administration, it developed into the struggle for complete independence.

The Character of the struggle was also gradually transformed. Beginning with constitutional agitation by small sections of educated people, it gradually turned into a revolutionary struggle, peaceful though not constitutional, of the overwhelming majority of the people of India. Besides being a struggle for political independence, it also became a struggle for the reconstruction of India society on the basis of democracy and social equality.

THE REVOLT OF 1857

The people in different parts of India, right from the beginning of the British conquest, never acquiesced in their political subjection. Not a year passed without an armed resistance to British rule in one part of the country or the other. Some of these revolts were those of the Sanyasis in Bengal and Bihar (1763 Onwards), of the peasants (Midnapur in 1766, Rangpur in 1783, Mysore in 1830-31, Khandesh in 1852), of the chiefs and other landed sections (for Ramnathapuram, Shivaganga and other places during 1795-1805, of Velu thambi in Travancore in 1808-09, of Rani Chinnamma of Kittur during 1824-29, etc.), and of the tribal people (notably of the Bhils during 1817-31, the Kols during 1820-37, the Khasis under U. Tirot Singh during 1829-33, the Santhals during 1855-56, etc. There were also mutinies, for example, at Vellore in 1806. All these revolts were, however sporadic and localized and though some of them lasted many years, they did not pose a serious challenge to British rule. The greatest of the revolts, which shook the very foundations of British rule, occurred in 1857.

The revolt began at Meerut on 10 May 1857, with the uprising of Indian sepoys of the British arms on India. It was the result of accumulated resentment, which had been growing since the beginning of British conquest, but was triggered off by the greased cartridge incident. In fact the cause were much deeper that this.

Peasants had been dispossessed of their lands and artisans had been ruined. The British policy of annexation of territory had led to the dispossession of many Indian rulers. As a result of these, discontent was widespread. Dalhousie, who came India as the Governor-General, annexed eight new states in the course of eight years of his stay in office. There was also fear in the minds of many people that the British government was out to forcibly convert them to Christianity. That the British government paid scant regard to the religious beliefs of the Indian people is clear from the use of the greased cartridge. Thus the British government had alienated vast numbers of people-common people as well as former rulers- and resentment had been building up for some time. Lord Metacalfe, who was the Governor-General in 1835-36, had written: All India is at all time looking out for our downfall. The people

everywhere would rejoice, or fancy they would rejoice at our destruction. And members are not wanting who would promote it by all means in their power. A little over 20 years after, the revolt broke out.

The revolt soon spread over northern, central and eastern India. The rebels declared Bahadur Shah II, the Mughal King, the Emperor of Hindustan. Hindus and Muslim fought shoulder to shoulder against the British. The deeds of valor of rebels, like the Rani of Jhansi, Maulvi Ahmadulla, Kanwar Singh, Bakht Khan and Tantia Tope, have become proud legends and have inspired the later generation.

The revolt was suppressed after biter fighting for over a year, though peace was not restored until 1859. The British rulers followed a ruthless and indiscriminate policy of vengeance. Thousands of people were hanged in Delhi, Lucknow and other places. The inhuman reprisals of the British government provoked resentment even in England. Many Englishmen protested against the barbarities of the British rulers and expressed their sympathy and support for the Indian People. The revolt and its cruel suppression left a legacy of bitterness and hatred amongst the people of India.

The revolt marked a turning point in the history of India. The rule of the East India Company Came to an end and the control passed to the British Crown. The British government promised not to annex any more Indian States. The Indian states accepted the paramountcy of the British government and became loyal allies of the British rule.

The revolt made the Indian people more politically conscious than before. The movements of social reform and modernization had already started. These movements gathered momentum. The hold of the Indian princes on the Indian people declined and it was increasingly realized that national independence would be attained through a movement of the people themselves and not under the leadership of the old rulers of India. The struggle against the rulers on Indian states itself became a part of the national struggle for the independence. The most valuable legacy of the revolt was the memory of united struggle. Soon India was to witness the growth of the nationalist movement aiming at national

independence democracy, social equality and national development.

RISE OF INDIAN NATIONALISM EARLY PHASE 1858-1905

Nationalism is a phenomenon which appeared in world history after the close of the Middle Ages. Nation-states had begun to be formed with definite boundaries, with a definite political system within these boundaries, with the uniformity of laws and with the people inhabiting the state living under the same political, social and economic system and sharing common aspirations. The middle class had played a significant role in the formation of nation-states. In many countries of Europe, like Italy and Germany, nationalism emerged as a powerful force only in the nineteenth century. The French Revolution of 1789 had added a new element to the phenomenon of nationalism. It identified the nation with the people. This meant that, in a nation, the people were sovereign. Wherever, after 1800 or so, new sovereign states have been called into experienced a violent of abrupt change of political order, they were best explained as conjunction of these two forces. at work--Nationalism and Democracy.

The growth of the Indian nationalism started in the nineteenth century. Political unification of the country, destruction of India's old social and economic system, the beginning of modern trade and industry and the rise of new social classes laid the basis of nationalism. The social and religious revolts contributed to the growth of nationalism.

British rule was inimical to the interest of almost all sections of Indian society. The peasants were suffering under the new land-tenure systems introduced by the British. The Indian Industrialist were not happy because of the economic policy of the British government. For example all import duties on cotton textiles were removed in 1882 which harmed the nascent Indian textile Industry. the educated people suffered because they were discriminated against. Almost all sections of the Indian society realized that their interests were antagonistic to British rule. The people of India became aware of the fact that the development of their country was not possible unless British rule was ended. All these factors forged the people of India into a Nation and this

consciousness expressed itself in the struggle for national independence.

Several other factors helped in the growth of national consciousness amongst India people. The exploitation of India by the British rules and dislocation caused by their policies worsened the condition of the already impoverished masses. There was a series of famines which took a toll of millions of human lives due to the indifference of the autocratic British administration. The British government made use of Indian resources to pursue its imperialist aims in other parts of Asia. The Governor General (now also the Viceroy) was the supreme authority in the country, responsible only to British parliament thousands of miles away. He was assisted by executive and legislative councils, which consisted of persons, mostly Englishmen appointed by him. Indian people had no say in the administration of the country. The Indian civil Service, which ran the administration of the country also consisted mostly of Englishmen. Though Indians could appear for competitive examinations were held in England and fey could afford to appear for them.

Another factor was the practice of racial discrimination. Before the revolt of 1857, many Englishmen, officials and others, were not averse to mixing socially with Indians. After the revolt, the feeling of racial superiority grew and everything Indian appeared inferior and barbaric to them. They were exclusive clubs and railway coaches for Europeans where the entry of Indians was prohibited. As Jawaharlal Nehru put it, "India as a nation and Indians as individuals were subjected to insult, humiliation ant contemptuous treatment." The feeling of racial superiority may be seen from the failure of the libert Bill in1883. The bill sought to bring Indians and Europeans on par as far as the criminal jurisdiction of court was concerned and to withdraw the privilege enjoyed by Europeans of being tried by a judge of their own race only. The Europeans launched an agitation against the bill and it was withdrawn.

The British government consistently followed a policy of repression after 1857. Many measures of the government provoked widespread agitation. Tow of these were the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 and the Arms Act of 1879. The former Act imposed severe

restriction on the freedom of the press and the later forbade the possession of arms by Indians.

Thus, various factors contributed to the rise of the nationalist movement. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the movement started assuming an all-India form. Beginning with the demand for small concessions, the nationalist movement for complete independence of India. The American War of Independence, the French Revolution, the wars of Italian unification, and the Ideas of Voltaire, Rosseau, Thomos Paine and Garibaldi and Mazzini (who were the leaders of the struggle for Italian Unification) provided inspiration to Indian nationalist. In the twentieth century, the ideas of socialism and internationalism influenced them.

EARLY POLITICAL MOVEMENTS AND THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

A number of political organizations came into existence in the later half of the nineteenth century. As early as 1851, the British Indian Association was formed in Bengal to represent Indian grievances to the British government. In 1876, Surendranath Banerjee founded the Indian Association in Bengal. DadaBhai Naoroji had started the Bombay Association. Some of the other associations were the Madras Native Association formed in 1852, the Puna Sarvajanik Sabha and the Madras Mahajan Sabha set up in 1870 and 1884 respectively. Attempts were made to form an All India organization. In 1883, Surendranath Banerjee called All-India National Conference which was described by its President as the first step to a National Parliament. In 1885, Indian National Congress was founded. In the founding of the Congress, a retired English civil servant, A.O. Hume, played an important role. The Governor General, Lord Dufferine blessed the Congress. He thought the Congress would be a good forum for the government to keep itself informed regarding the best Indian Public opinion. Soon however the Congress was to become a revolutionary organization leading the Indian people to independence.

Even at the first session of the congress held in Bombay, under the Presidentship of W.C. Bannerjee all regions of India were represented. Persons attending the session belong to different

religious faiths. The problems, that were discussed concerned all Indians, Irrespective of their religion, caste language and region. Thus the Indian nationalist movement, which the congress represented, was from the start, an all-India secular movement embracing every section of Indian society. It was attended by such eminent person as Dadabhai Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji, W.C. Banerjee, G Subramanya, Aiyer, P. Ananda Charlu, Behramji Malabari and N.G. Chandavarkar.

The Congress followed a moderate program during the first two years of its coming into existence. The aim of the congress, as outlined by its President, W.C. Banerjee, was to enable the workers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other and to unite the people of India for common political ends irrespective of differences in respect of race and language or social and religious institutions. The Congress held its session once a year passed resolutions for the consideration of the government. They demanded not independence but representative institutions. Some of the early demands of the congress were for elected representatives in the provincial and central legislative councils, holding the Indian Civil Service Examinations in India and raising the minimum age of entry, the reduction of military expenditure, the spread of education, industrial development of India, relief in agricultural indebtedness and the amendment of the Arms Act.

The leadership of the Congress, which included leaders like Surendranath Banerjee, M.G. Ranade, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, R.C. Dutta and Pherozeshah Mehta, had faith in justness of their demands and in the British government. They believed that, as soon as the British government was convinced of the justness of their demands these would be accepted.

They wanted not separation but association with British Government. Surendranath Banerjee, for example said "It is not severance that we look forward to but unification, permanent embodiment as an integral part of that great empire that has given the rest of the world the models of free institutions." However, the criticism of the government gradually increased at the sessions of the Congress and more radical demands were raised. At the second session of the Congress, one speaker said " Self-Government

is the arbiter of nature and the will of Divine Providence. Every nation must be arbiter of its destiny. But do we govern ourselves ? No, are we not living then in an unnatural state ? Yes ". With the growth of these radical ideas in the congress, the government became hostile to it. Government servant were barred from attending the Congress Sessions. Lord Dufferin referred to it contemptuously as representing a 'Microscopic Minority' and being unworthy of attention.

In the early period, the congress was dominated by what were called 'Moderates'. Its demand were primarily demands of the educated middle class and rising Indian industrialists. However, it played an extremely significant role in the early stages of the growth of the Indian nationalist movement. Its emphasis on national unity, its criticism of the drain of Indian wealth, its demand for representative institutions and Indianization of services, its opposition to repressive measures like the Arms Act and its constant underscoring of people's poverty as the basic factor of Indian politics helped to put the nationalist movement on sound foundations. This phase of the movement lasted till about 1905.

INDIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT (1905-1919)

Even the moderate demands of the Congress were not accepted by British Government. The non-fulfillment demands, combined with the rising awareness among the people led to the growth of a radical wing in the Congress which advanced the movement further. A new phase began in the history of the Indian nationalist movement. New demands were made and new methods of struggle adopted with increased mass mobilization.

Rise of Extremism

At the turn of the century. a new trend developed which has been called 'Extremism'. Under the influence of the new trend the nationalist movement gave up the practice of merely issuing appeals to the government and adopted new radical ways of political agitation. The demands put forward also assumed a more radical character. Several new factors contributed to this.

Curzon came to India as the new Viceroy in December 1898. During his period of Viceroyalty, he imposed extremely unpopular measures which intensified the opposition to British rule. He had said that he would assist in the 'Peaceful demise' of the Congress. When he left India, the Congress and the Nationalist movement were stronger than ever before and had, in fact, assumed new dimensions.

His most unpopular act was the partition of Bengal. The object of the measure was given out as administrative convenience. The leaders could clearly see that it was actually measure to divide the people. East Bengal was to be a Muslim majority province and the West a Hindu majority province. The partition was designed to disrupt Hindu-Muslim unity and thus weaken the nationalist movement. However, the effect of the measure belied the hopes of the British Government. It provoked an agitation and such angry reaction against British rule that the partition measure had to be annulled.

International events also contributed to the growth of vigorous nationalism. Russia was defeated by Japan in 1905. This was the first victory over an European Nation. Although Japan herself was turning into an imperialist gains in China, Japan's victory gave confidence to the Indian nationalist in their struggle against Britain. the revolution had aimed at the overthrow of the Czarist autocracy but had been suppressed. The revolution also influenced the thinking of Indian nationalist.

The group which led the 'Extremists' in the Congress consisted of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Rajpat Rai. It was usually referred to as "Lal Bal Pal". They extolled the past of India in order to inculcate self-confidence and national pride in the Indian people. Tilak had been active in the Congress since 1890. In 1897 he was prosecuted and sentenced to 18 months rigorous imprisonment for his seditious writing and speeches. He had started a newspaper 'Kesari' in Marathi through which he conducted his nationalist campaigns. He revived the 'Ganapati and Shivaji' festivals and made use of them fir arousing national feelings. He exhorted people to action which according to him, was the true message of the Bhagwat Gita. In this period the 'Extremist' wing came to be more and more concerned with

arousing pride in Indian Culture. In Bengal the cult of the Goddess Kali was adopted. The extremist condemned the old leadership of the Congress for their praise of Western culture and their faith in the British Government.

There was a wide divergence between the views of the extremist and the moderates on the means to achieve political rights. Tilak summed up the difference thus "Political rights will have to be fought for. The moderates think that these can be won by persuasion. We think that they can only be got by strong pressure". The extremist leaders drew masses into the struggle, particularly in urban areas. The mobilization of the people, particularly the youth for the struggle was a major contribution of the extremists.

THE BOYCOTT AND SWADESHI MOVEMENTS

The partition of Bengal created widespread indignation all over the country. In the turbulent atmosphere that followed the boycott and Swadeshi movements started. Swadeshi literally meaning of one's own country, aimed at the promotion of indigenous industry. Along with Swadeshi, boycott of British goods was organized. The Swadeshi and boycott were powerful instruments directed against foreign rule. They attacked the British rule where it hurt most. About Swadeshi Lalpat Rai said " I regard it as a salvation of my country. the Swadeshi movement ought to teach us how to organize our capital, resources, labor, energies, talents for the greatest good of all Indians irrespective of creed, color or caste. It ought to unite us, our religious and denominational differences notwithstanding. In my opinion, Swadeshi ought to be the common religion of united India.". On the boycott movement, he said, "The meaning of the boycott is this... The primary thing is prestige of the government and the boycott strikes at the root of the prestige. The illusory thing they call prestige is more powerful and potent than authority itself and propose to do this by boycott--We desire to turn away our faces from the government house and turn them to the huts of people".

It was at the height of nation-wide protest movement against the partition of Bengal that the annual session of the Congress was held at Calcutta in 1906. At the session Dadabhai Naoroji sponsered

the new programme of the congress which had been advocated by the Extremist.

Dadabhai's support for the stewardship of the programme led to its general approval. For the first time, it declared the attainment of Swaraj as the aim of the Congress. Swaraj or self-government was defined as the system of government obtaining in the self governing British colonies. The Swadeshi and the boycott movements were favored as the means of resistance. Promotion of national education was declared as an aim of the Congress.

The Swadeshi and boycott movements spread to many parts of country. Shops selling foreign goods were picketed. Students played an important part in the Swadeshi and boycott movement. Meetings were held all over the country and associations were formed. The government restored to repressive measures. Meeting were banned, the chanting of the nation song Bande Mataram composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was prohibited, recognition was withdrawn from schools and grants were stopped, processionists were lathi-charged and various attempts were made to strike terror in the people. However, all the measures of oppression were of no avail.

The popular upheaval was so intense that many people came to believe that the end of British rule was near. It was at the first time that Tilak wrote ' Repression is repression, if it is legal, it must be resisted peacefully; but if it is illegal, it must be illegally met". He also gave Congress the slogan "Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it." The movement continued into the year 1907. The nationalist newspaper were banned and their editors prosecuted. Many leaders were imprisoned.

In 1907, the 23rd session of the Congress was held at Surat. here the 'Moderats' and the extremist came into conflict. The 'Moderates' wanted to modify the resolutions Swadeshi and the boycott passed at Calcutta session in the previous year. They also wanted to write into the constitution of the congress a clause that self-government was to be achieved through constitutional means and by reforming the existing system administration. They were opposed the intensification of the movement. Tilak tried to capture the leadership of the Congress. There ensued disorderly scenes and session broke up. The two group later meet separately.

Leadership of Congress remained in the hands of moderate group. The 'extremist' worked separately until the reunion in 1916.

Meanwhile, the repressive measures of the government continued. The repression was particularly brutal in, Maharastra,Punjab and Tamil Nadu. In 1907 the Seditious meeting Act was passed to prevent the holding of meeting 'Likely to promote the disturbance of public tranquility'. In 1910, the Indian Press Act was passed which gave the authorities wide power to punish the editor of any paper which publish the matter which in their view was incitement rebellion. The government deported people without trial under a century old law. A numbers of newspapers were banned and leaders imprisoned and deported. Tilak was sentenced to six years imprisonment deported to Mandalay for two articles which he had published in his paper Keshari. His arrest was widely resented and led to one of the earliest strikes in the history of the India by the textile workers of Bombay.

Thus in the first decade of the twentieth century the nationalist movement entered a new phase. More and more people were drawn into it. And they were no longer satisfied by appeals to the government. The association of religion with the movements in some places encouraged communal thinking and proved harmful.

Indian National Congress Founded in 1885 by a narrowly based national elite, the Indian National Congress (INC) gradually transformed into a broadbased nationalist organisation from the beginning of the 20th century. The Anglo-Indian agitation against the Ilbert Bill during RIPON's viceroyalty served to underline the efficacy of an all-India political organisation as India's English educated politicians wished to speak effectively and authoritatively to the British rulers. SURENDRANATH BENERJEE, who had been playing a key role in organising nationalist forums like the INDIAN ASSOCIATION (1876) and the National Conference (1883), welcomed the move of AO Hume, a retired British ICS officer, for establishing an organisation by the western educated upper class Indians to function as a 'safety valve' for the escape of growing resentment of Indians against British rule. Hume had the blessings of VICEROY DUFFERIN who accepted the idea of

such an organisation as the 'loyal opposition' to the British Raj. Barrister WC Banerjee was chosen as the first president of the INC's inaugural session in Bombay in December 1885.

Surendranath Benerjee joined the INC at its second session in Calcutta in 1886. The INC was then not a full-fledged political party, rather a loose association of influential men in provincial politics trying to build up a national platform. Leading public figures such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Feroze Shah Mehta, Badruddin Tayabji, KT Telang and others associated themselves with the INC.

The Indian National Congress initially had little year round activity and was active only in its annual gatherings. Its delegates were mostly upper caste Hindus and its leaders primarily came from the legal profession. Known for their loyalty to the Raj, they did not like radical sort of political or social change and were interested in having some say in government administration and structures of political life. Until 1905 these moderate leaders confined themselves to political agitation by 'prayer-petition-protest'.

At the beginning the Muslims were not attracted to INC in significant numbers. Sir Sayyed Ahmad advised the Muslims to keep themselves away from INC in the interest of furthering Muslim solidarity. Aswini Datta, the mass leader of Barisal, described each of the sessions of the INC as 'three-day opera'. The moderate leaders of the INC believed that British rule in India was a good dispensation, which can be made better through negotiations. They shunned the violence of small groups of terrorists and revolutionaries in Bengal, the Punjab and Bombay provinces.

Viceroy Curzon's measure of partitioning the province of Bengal in 1905 evoked strong protest from the Bangali Hindu leaders and ultimately gave rise to militant politics of AUROBINDO GHOSH, Bipin Chandra Pal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai. The Calcutta-based SWADESHI MOVEMENT and the programme of boycotting British goods were instrumental in creating the extremist faction within the INC. The moderate and extremist leaders openly and violently clashed in the Surat session (1907) over the 'policy of mendicancy' pursued by the moderates.

The INC suffered a split as the extremists came out of it. Congressmen were divided by personal animosities, and factionalism became endemic within the INC at national, provincial and local levels. Meanwhile, the MUSLIM LEAGUE (ML) was formed in 1906 to protect the interests of the Muslims.

When the British government involved India in Britain's war efforts in 1914 without consulting Indian opinion, strong Indian resentment against this policy brought the INC and the ML closer. The leaders of INC and ML entered into 'Lucknow Pact' (1916) to strengthen India's demand for self-government. The growing popularity of the Home Rule Leagues led by Annie Besant and B.G Tilak and the 'Lucknow Pact' persuaded the British government to promise in 1917 self-government on a gradual basis. But the political situation suddenly changed for the worse in the wake of the Jalianwala Bagh massacre in 1919.

By the 1920s the old uncertainties of imperial paternalism were gone. There were clear signs of the beginning of a more popular politics, being welded into a nationalist movement by a new leader Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who had experience of launching non-violent Satyagraha movement in South Africa and had emerged in Indian politics at this hour with his new technique of offering resistance to injustice. He received support from the Congress leadership and also from the national revolutionaries who agreed to give him a chance of realising his stated goal of achieving 'Swaraj' (self-government) in one year's time. Gandhi utilised the grievances of the Indian Muslims over the issue of Khilafat for forging unity among the Hindus and the Muslims against British imperialism.

Gandhi launched in 1920 his non-cooperation movement which was the first truly national and popular political campaign against the British government. Gandhi's strategy boosted the significance of the INC in Indian politics. The INC undoubtedly owed much of its success into building itself as the organisations of mainstream nationalism in the 1920s to Gandhi and a number of other leaders like Motilal Nehru, Madan Mohan Malavya and CHITTA RANJAN DAS. Later emerged a new generation of leaders who were content to work with Gandhi and submit to his authority. Prominent among this group were C Raja Gopalachari, Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad and Sardar Vallabbhai Patel. SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE was initially a part of this group but soon was unwilling to submit to Gandhi. Though the INC accepted in 1929 complete independence of India as its goal, its main aim was to force concessions from the British imperialists. Through the NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT (1920-22) and the CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT (1930-34) Gandhi exercised his charisma over millions of men and women to make INC a mass-based political forum.

When the British government arranged the Round Table conferences and offered the 'communal award' for reservation of seats in legislatures for different communities and scheduled castes, Gandhi resisted it by undertaking a fast unto death, but the superior skill of political dialogue and divisive strategy of the British imperialism ultimately got Gandhi and the INC outwitted. The Government of India Act (1935) did not introduce full responsible government at the central level but introduced responsible autonomy at the provincial level. There was much resentment within the INC against the proposed federation with the 'native states' and the formidable 'special power' in the governor general's hand.

An inner pressure group of leftists and socialists within the INC was formed in 1934 styled as the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) with Acharya Narendra Dev as chairman and Jayaprakash Narayan as general secretary. Nehru and Subhas Bose sympathised with the cause of socialism but did not formally join the CSP. The leaders and workers of the Communist Party of India, which was banned at that time, worked through the CSP. The group of MN Roy and the Krishak Sabha maintained close contact with the INC and the CSP. The consolidation of leftist forces within the INC caused some consternation in Gandhi and the rightist camp of the INC.

In the elections held in 1937 under the Government of India Act 1935, the INC achieved great successes in the general seats and formed its own government in six Hindu-majority provinces. It failed electorally in Sind and the Punjab and became the single largest party in Assam, Bengal and NWFP. In Bengal the INC's decision to reject the coalition offer from AK FAZLUL HUQ's

KRISHAK PRAJA PARTY paved the way for the Muslim League-Krishak Praja Party coalition. The ML's desire to form a coalition government with the INC in UP was also sabotaged by Nehru's insistence on ML accepting the 'congress creed'. In order to take the wind out of the leftist sail Gandhi nominated the leftist leader Subhas Bose as the Congress president at the Haripura session (1938).

Bose refused to be an obedient disciple of Gandhi, and showed dynamic leadership bent on a massive struggle against imperialism and laying the broad principles of planned economic development of India. Gandhi and the rightist leaders refused to re-elect Bose for the next year, but their nominee was defeated by Bose with the help of the leftists. This confrontation eventually pushed Bose out of the INC. Meanwhile, the ML adopted the LAHORE RESOLUTION (1940) calling for establishing independent Muslim states in the subcontinent. In 1941, Bose left India to Europe and from there to the East Asian war theatres to launch armed struggle against British imperialism.

Gandhi launched the QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT in August 1942, which went in a violent way and was suppressed quickly. This was followed by a series of negotiations between the British government, the INC and the ML for transfer of power. Viceroy Wavell called all concerned parties to the Simla Conference in June-July 1945, but nothing concrete emerged. The search for a consensus between the INC and ML proved illusive.

Between December 1945 and February 1946 fresh elections were held in which the Indians were found to be clearly divided in their allegiance to the INC and the ML. Meanwhile there was a massive popular upsurge against British rule in the wake of the trial of the officers of Indian National Army of Subhas Bose, followed by revolts in the Royal Indian Navy in February 1946 and also wide discontent in the army, police and civil service. The British Prime Minister Attlee announced the appointment of a high power CABINET MISSION for negotiation with the Indian leaders. The mission recommended a Constituent Assembly and a responsible interim government to be formed by Indian ministers. The ML's demand for Pakistan was not accepted, but a grouping of provinces was recommended to accommodate the demand for

powerful provinces on the communal divide. Both the Congress and the League grudgingly accepted the recommendations, but the whole plan was ruined as Nehru indiscreetly asserted the INC's rights to proceed on constitution making without any precondition. This attitude alienated MOHAMMED ALI JINNAH and the ML which began sabotaging Nehru's interim cabinet and organised violent campaigns to force the British government to concede the demand for partition of India in early 1947. Attlee sent LORD MOUNTBATTEN as the new viceroy and set the deadline of June 1948 for ending British rule in India. Things now began moving fast. The partition of India took place on 14 August 1947. It will be no exaggeration if I say secularism is the very life breath of Indian politics. One can hardly conceive of Indian polity sans secularism. However, it also faces several problems in Indian context. We will throw light and discuss the problematic of secularism in India. Before we do so we must explain meaning and context of Indian secularism.

Secularism in India did not emerge, unlike in Europe, as a result of struggle against authority of church. In Europe since it emerged as a result of struggle against Church, it carried within itself an atheistic trend. It certainly implied a sort of indifference towards religion, if not antagonism to it. Recently this has been further intensified due to increasing consumerism and materialism.

In India religion has always been at the centre stage. Thus secularism here was never conceived as indifference, much less antagonism, to religion. Secularism was conceived as a philosophy giving equal respect to all religions including regional faith traditions. When Indian National Congress was founded, its founders feared it may be dubbed as a Hindu party by non-Hindu minorities. Thus it was sought to be made an all inclusive party and three of its presidents came from minority communities in its early days:

(1) Badruddin Tyebji-Muslim from Bombay;

(2) W.C.Banerjee-A Christian from Bengal and Dadabhai Nawroji from Parsi Community.

Thus the Congress got support from all these communities from the day one. Even the Ulema, who were struggling against

British rule readily supported it and urged their fellow-Muslims to join the Congress en mass. Maulana Qasim Ahmed Nanotwi, the founder of Darul Ulum Deoband, issued a fatwa to this effect himself and collected several more such fatwas from other ulema of repute and published them under the title of Nusrat-ul-Ahrar (Help for the Freedom fighters). The Ulema were convinced of the all inclusive character of the Congress Party and enthusiastically cooperated with it for throwing out British imperialist from India.

Thus our secularism is more in multi-religious context than any struggle against church or any religious authority for that matter. The Congress adopted secularism as an all-inclusive philosophy. Our country has a very rich experience of religious pluralism and multi-culturalism for centuries. We were never mono-religious or mono-cultural in any period of our history. The West has known religious pluralism and multi-culturalism only after World War II.

Some intellectuals immediately after independence thought secularism in India also should mean indifference to religion, if not being anti-religious and criticized state for associating with any religious events. Even our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was more or less of this view. But soon he had realized that it may not be workable in India and defined Indian secularism as equal protection to all religions by state. Thus real criteria for state remaining secular is whether it provides equal support to all religions or inclines more towards one or the other religion.

Having thrown light on the nature of Indian secularism we come to the problems Indian secularism faces. In fact we can divide state into two categories: 1) notional and 2) functional. As far as notional aspect is concerned it is defined by its Constitution. The Indian state adopted the Constitution which defines nature and functions of state, rights citizens enjoy and role of executive and judiciary.

As far as notional aspect is concerned i.e. constitutional provisions, I do not think there is much of a problem. When we faced some problems the Constitution was amended and our Constitution has been amended more than 100 times. Thus as far as notional aspect is concerned there is no problem. But its functional aspect is expressed through the government and its

way of functioning. The problematic of secularism starts with functional aspect, not with its notional aspect. The government is formed by a political party. For more or less 40 years after independence the Congress continued to rule and under Nehru Congress remained firmly committed to secularism but even under Nehru, it faced severe problems as other congress leaders were not so categorically committed and had quite ambiguous and some of them even communally inclined attitude.

Thus in 1948 itself Chief Minister of U.P. Govind Ballabh Pant, defied Nehru's instructions and did not remove idols of Ram and Sita which were installed in Babri masjid at midnight. Even Sardar Patel had written to C.M. of U.P. to remove the idols. If Pant had taken the step India would not have faced such huge problem in late eighties and early nineties.

Indian state, functionally, always remained soft as so clearly demonstrated by Jan Myrdal, a Swedish Economist, who wrote his famous work "Asian Drama" in sixties. The successive Governments kept on yielding to pressures and took decisions which did not conformed to secular values which our Constitution upholds. Even Nehru felt isolated on the question of curbing communal violence in Jabalpur which shook him.

On several crucial questions Central Government yielded to pressures and took unprincipled decisions violating secular values. There are several instances but two most crucial questions on which Government yielded which severely affected Indian secular polity, were Shah Bano judgment and the Babri masjid issue. Rajiv Gandhi bowed to the pressure by some Muslim leaders and enacted a law reversing the Supreme Court judgment in the Shah Bano case and Narsimha Rao did nothing to save Babri masjid and let it be demolished by the BJP hooligans.

This reversal of Supreme Court judgment in one case and total and deliberate non-action to save Babri Masjid seriously compromised Indian secularism and it proved that Indian Government does not act firmly on secular principles but yields to all sorts of pressures and takes opportunist stand. It never wishes to send strong and principled message by taking firm stand on crucial matters and does not mind at all displaying its weakness and opportunism for the sake of power.

Another crucial issue is communal violence. India was repeatedly rocked by communal violence in post-independence period. The Congress leadership, it is said, ultimately agreed to partition to save country from civil war and curb widespread communal violence and hoped that independent India would not witness communal violence. That is why Nehru was greatly shaken by Jabalpur riots which he never expected in independent India.

But this was just the beginning. Had he been alive he would have witnessed much worse riots in 1969 in Ahmedabad (in which more than 1000 people were done to death brutally) and 1970 Bhivandi-Jalgaon riots (in which about 400 persons including women and children) were done to death. Then followed several major riots in eighties which were worse in severity. Some of these riots were Moradabad (1980), Biharsharif (1981), Baroda and Meerut (19820, Neili, Assam (1983) in which more than 4000 people were massacred, Bombay Bhivandi riots and anti-Sikh riots (1984 May and November), Meerut (1987), it was in Hashimpura, Meerut that 42 persons were pulled out of their houses and shot by PAC and their bodies thrown into canal, 1989 Bhagalpur riots in which more than 800 persons perished and then 1992-93 riots in Mumbai, Surat, Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Kanpur and several other places in India.

Now all these riots took place under Congress regimes, both at the Centre and states. These were, to say the least, horrible riots and Congress regime never tried to curb communal violence seriously. Not because the Congress party swerved from secular ideology but because most of the individual Congressmen were of either communal bent of mind or truly secular individuals in the party felt helpless and isolated.

For all politicians be they of the Congress or any other secular parties, power was ultimate aim, not constitutional principles or secularism. If power is prioritized over principles, country would witness such calamities repeatedly. State machinery was always grossly misused in all major communal riots. The politicians used police to promote their own interests and seriously compromised integrity and professionalism of the police.

Police, with some honourable exceptions, always displayed its communal character in almost all the riots. In Bombay riots

1992-93 and Gujarat riots 2002 it played leading role and brought shame to itself. This is mostly because police was instrumental in promoting interests of politicians and so even honest policemen got isolated, transferred or demoted. Lower ranks of the police has been highly communalized and even brutalized.

The governments are quite unwilling to take steps to organize refresher courses for the police to instill in them secular values as they want to use them time and again to organize communal violence as and when it suits them. All election strategies are also based on caste and communal arithmetic and hence it is nearly impossible to be firm on secular values and principles. Our electoral method is exclusive, rather than inclusive. Parties aim at this or that caste and community votes. Thus elections are won by excluding some and including some.

As long as our electoral method is exclusivistic, secularism would continued to be weakened. We have to abandon first past the post method which tends to work by excluding one community or the other and opt for inclusive method by adopting 51 per cent votes compulsory for winning and then no politician would target one community excluding other community or caste. This will help greatly in promoting secularism which is about including all in political processes.

The people of India had battled long against the British Empire for complete political independence, which began with the Rebellion of 1857. The Indian Rebellion of 1857 consisted of armed uprisings against the colonial authority of the British people in India between early 1857 and mid 1858. The period and events are also called the First War of Indian Independence.

Thereafter, in course of time, several movements were organised. The Indian National Congress came into existence in 1885. And there arrived on the political scene of India the great personalities Lal-Bal-Pal [Lala Lajpat Ray, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bepin Chandra Pal] and Sri Aurobindo.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was the first Indian nationalist who embraced Swaraj as the destiny of the nation. He said: "Swaraj is my birthright, and I shall have it." This utterance inspired the Indians.

During the period from 1905 to 1910, Sri Aurobindo became a leader of the Indian nationalist movement, and His younger brother Barin was directly involved with the extremist activities of the group, known as Jugantar, an underground revolutionary organization. Sri Aurobindo was one of the founders of the said organization. During the period, He was also the editor of a nationalist Bengali newspaper Vande Mataram and, consequently, came into frequent confrontation with the British administration. In 1907, he was already regarded as the new leader of the Indian nationalist movement.

Sri Aurobindo was arrested on 2nd May 1908 in connection with the trial of Alipore Bomb Case. And He was acquitted on 5th May 1909. For one full year He was in prison.

In 1908, in Bengal, there was an outburst of public anger against the British administration, causing civil unrest. A nationalist campaign was carried out by several groups of revolutionaries, led by Sri Aurobindo and others. The British took hard steps against the activists and the consequences led to an event on April 30, 1908, as two revolutionary disciples, Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose, attempted to kill an ill-famed judge. However, the bomb thrown by them missed its target and instead killed two British women in a horse carriage.

The local police immediately arrested Sri Aurobindo and his brother Barin, along with many other activists and the revolutionaries. Sri Aurobindo was arrested on charges of planning and supervising the attack and was imprisoned in solitary confinement in Alipore for one full year. He was acquitted in 1909, though several others were imprisoned for longer periods or awarded the capital punishment. Khudiram was hanged, while Prafulla Chaki died during chase by the Police, in a mysterious way. During the trial, what Sri Aurobindo's advocate Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das said is an immortal speech:

"My appeal to you is this, that long after the controversy will be hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, the agitation will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone, his words will be echoed and re-echoed, not only in India but across distant

seas and lands. Therefore, I say that the man in his position is not only standing before the bar of this Court, but before the bar of the High Court of History…"

The Indian National Congress (INC) has a long and illustrious history. Great persons such as Gopalakrishna Gokhale, Lala Lajpat Rai, Gandhi and Bose served on its presidency before the Independence. The Congress was split into two groups in1967: INC (Organization) and the New Congress, which later came to be known as the Congress(I), named after Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister. The Congress (I) as it is known today in India, is an important political force-an organization continued under the leadership of the Nehru/Gandhi family. Eventually, the Congress (O) later merged into the newly formed Janata Dal.

After the Sepoy Mutiny or the First War of Indian Independence (1857), Sir Allen Octavian Hume and some other Englishmen in India, with a view to build a harmony between the ruling English and the lndian people, founded the Indian National Union, which turned into the Indian National Congress (INC). Sri W C Banerjee was the first President thereof.

The birth of INC marked the entry of new educated middle-class into politics and transformed the Indian political horizon.

However, in 1919, there was an opening of fire on a peaceful protest rally in Jallianwala Bagh. That was indeed an act of savagery, unparalleled in Indian History. The firing was opened, under the command of Brigadier Reginald Dyer, on an unarmed gathering of men, women and children. The firing continued for about 10 minutes and 1650 rounds were fired. The number of death as per official sources was 379. But according to an unofficial sources, it was more than 1000, with more than 2000 wounded.

The freedom movement then took a violent turn against the acts of cruelty and repression of the British Empire. New extremist and revolutionary leaders emerged, like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Subhas Chandra Bose.

Surya Sen, a teacher in a national school in Chittagong in Bengal, had actively participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement. Along with others from the local Congress members and several young recruits, Surya Sen organized a small-scale

rebellion to show that it was possible to challenge the armed and mighty British empire in India. They planned to assail and seize the two main armories in Chittagong and seize the arms, with an aim to form an armed unit of four large bands of revolutionaries. In a fierce fight in April, 1930, eighty British soldiers and twelve revolutionaries were killed. The armed revolutionaries dispersed into the rural area of Chittagong. The Chittagong Armoury Raid had tremendously impressed the people of Bengal and inspired numerous other actions of armed resistance. Surya Sen was eventually arrested and hanged in 1934. Many of his colleagues were also caught and imprisoned for long terms.

In 1928, a commission under John Simon was formed by the British Government to report on the current political situation in India. As no Indian was included as its member, the Indian political parties boycotted the commission, with protests all over India. During the commission's visit to Lahore on October 30, 1928, Lala Lajpat Rai led the protest in a silent and non-violent march. But the police violently beat up Lala Lajpat Rai severely and he expired. Bhagat Singh was an eyewitness to this event. He vowed to take revenge and along with Shivaram Rajguru, Jai Gopal and Sukhdev Thapar assassinated Saunders, a Deputy Superintendent of Police. Bhagat Singh quickly left Lahore in a disguise to escape the police.

The Defence of India Act was passed by the British Government under an ordinance to give more power to the police, with a view to combat revolutionaries. In reaction, Bhagat Singh and his friends planned to explode a bomb in the central assembly. As decided, on April 8, 1929, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt, another revolutionary, threw bombs in the Central Legislative Assembly in New Delhi. None got killed or injured, because it was not the intension. The British forensics investigators found that the bomb was not powerful enough to cause injury or death and that the bomb was thrown away from people. Singh and Dutt gave themselves up for arrest after the bomb. The Assembly Bomb Case trial followed. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were hanged on 23rd March 1931 by the British in spite of tremendous popular opposition. Bhagat Singh turned into a household hero, and the incident led to an outpouring of grief and sorrow all over the nation.

One of the most popular, charismatic idealistic and prominent leaders of the Indian Independence Movement against the British Rule was Subhas Chandra Bose, who was generally known as Netaji [the Leader]. Many regard his sacrifice for the nation to be the maximum, unparalleled.

Netaji was elected as the president of the Indian National Congress for two consecutive terms but resigned from the post following ideological conflicts with Gandhiji. Bose was in favour of violent resistance against the British rule and believed that Mahatma Gandhi's tactics of non-violence would never be sufficient. for India 's independence, and advocated violent resistance. Gandhiji also declared: Pattabhi Sitaramayya's defeat is my defeat. Netaji established a separate political party, the All India Forward Bloc and continued to call for the full and immediate independence of India from British rule. He was imprisoned by the British authorities eleven times.

With the outbreak of the second world war (1939-1945), he fled India and travelled to the Soviet Union, Germany and Japan seeking an alliance with the aim of attacking the British in India. With Japanese assistance he re-organised and later formed the Indian National Army, which consisted of the Indian prisoners-of-war and plantation workers from Malaya, Singapore and other parts of Southeast Asia, and led it against British forces. He formed the Azad Hind Government in exile, formed and led the Indian National Army to battle against the British and the allies in Imphal & Burma during the World War II.

He is believed to have died on 18 August 1945 in a plane crash over Taiwan. However, contradictory evidence exists regarding his death in the accident, and Many do not believe the story of the plane crash.

Jyotsna Kamat says:

"The Indian people were so much enamored of Bose's oratory and leadership qualities, fearlessness and mysterious adventures, that he had become a legend. They refused to believe that he died in the plane crash. The famous Red Fort trial, wherein Bose's generals and the INA officers were tried, became landmark events. Initially, the British Government thought of a court-

martial, but there was a countrywide protest against any kind of punishment. For common Indians, Axis and Allied powers hardly mattered, but they could not tolerate punishment of fellow countrymen who were fighting for freedom. The British Government was in no position to face open rebellion or mutiny and a general amnesty for INA soldiers was declared.

While Bose's approach to Indian freedom continues to generate heated debate in the Indian society today, there is no denying of his burning patriotism, his tireless efforts to free India from inside and outside and his reckless adventures in trying to reach his goals. His exploits later became a legend due to the many stories carried by the disbanded INA soldiers who came from every nook and corner of our great country.

Had he lived, Subhas Chandra Bose could have given a new turn to Independent India's political history. But he lives on eternally in the Indian mind, more famous after his death."

Mohandas Gandhi's taking helm of INC was a turning point in its history due to his enormous following, his spiritual approach and his non-violent means. Gandhi introduced the concepts of Satyagraha (rightful demand) and Ahimsa, which appealed to the common Indians.

Gandhi adhered to a strictly non-violent protest. Whenever a disturbing incident broke out, he suspended his actions, fasted and prayed for peace, And always he was successful.

INC launched the Quit India Movement in 1942. Gandhi reasoned that "... a few thousand British cannot control or govern millions of Indians".

At the time of the Quit India movement, the Congress was undoubtedly the strongest political and revolutionary organization in India. The Indian National Congress was then surely the true representative of the Indian people.

India won Freedom on 15 th August 1947. INC had played a very vital role in the Indian national movement.

Of course, the Gandhi-Nehru group of Congress has been given much credit for India's independence and also her struggle for independence; but it is a truth that India's freedom movement

was in fact a movement of the masses and there were a number of great leaders with intense and ardent patriotism and great visions who sacrificed their entire lives for the nation's cause, prior to the coming Gandhi and Nehru on the scene, and even there were those who were his contemporaries. Not only political leaders, but also there were many great persons who have built several aspects of the nation, such as Raja Ram Mohan Ray, Ramkrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, Subhas Chandra Bose and many others who are great souls. All of them have contributed in building this nation that had remained under the shackles of foreign rule for a long time.

Gandhi's contribution is definitely very great. Besides being the leader in bringing the Freedom, he was a great moral force, an apostle of non-violence and he is relevant to every human being always, whenever he tries to surpass himself spiritually or morally or when he aspires to something great and seemingly impossible.

Gandhi was a great man, in the true sense of the term. He was one of the greatest, not only in India, but throughout the world, for a long, long time. He loved Truth. And he loved humanity and believed that God is existent in fellow human beings. Gandhi was a man of strong convictions, which gave him extraordinary power that he exerted over large numbers of people. He said: "My life is my message," as he advised what he himself practised.

He wanted harmony and compatibility between one's words and deeds. For him, there was no split between politics and spirituality. True spirituality is seen in one's day-to-day activities, according to Gandhi.

Spirituality, for him, was an inner change. Hence a life, lived only for one's own selfish aims, is not spiritual.

He is one of those few men who asserted the essential goodness within human beings. And he continues to inspire in us so that we can still change us and change this world into a better world.

But his attempts and endeavours to rise to a high moral perfection could not stop him to say that Pattabhi Sitaramayya's defeat to Subhas Chandra Bose was his personal defeat.

And his extra-ordinary power and his inner goodness could not stop the Hindu-Muslim riots and the political difference that created Pakistan out of India.

He agreed to support Nehru and others of the Congress, who preferred the partition of India to the swearing-in of Jinnah as the first Prime Minister of India, as a result of which India was divided, and millions of people suffered relentlessly.

It is said that the partition plan was approved by the Congress leadership as the only way to prevent a wide-scale Hindu-Muslim civil war. But what happened was worse than a civil war. But Nehru's ambition to become the Prime Minister was fulfilled, amidst the bloodshed of millions.

It has been told by some that a New Nation was born. Unfortunately, the circumstances were such that 'the Father of the Nation' had to see and receive the New Born in a curtailed body. The New Born was cut to size; its two wings were cut off.

India, as we know, was older and greater than the present day Independent India. We will think about it. Both the Mahatma and the would-be premier Nehru yielded to the Divide and Rule policy of the British, and also Nehru's desire to become the Prime Minister in place of Jinnah in an undivided India paved the way for dividing India.

Millions of Indians had to suffer. Massive exchange of the people took place between India and the newly created Pakistan. Following and just before the partition, about 14.5 million people crossed the borders. As per 1951 Census, 7,226,000 Muslims left for Pakistan from India, whereas 7,249,000 Hindus and Sikhs came to India from Pakistan, immediately after partition. Majority of the people who came to India became really penniless paupers. Just before and after the Partition, massive violence and homicide took place in India and Pakistan.

Estimates of the number of deaths, caused by the killings, may range from roughly 500,000, to the high estimates at 1,000,000.

During the last sixty years, Pakistan has practically been a constant headache for India.

It is said that Gandhi advised the Congress to reject the proposals of partition of India. It is said that the partition plan

was approved by the Congress leadership as the only way to prevent a wide-scale Hindu-Muslim civil war. Congress leaders knew that Gandhi would oppose partition, and it was impossible for the Congress to go ahead without his agreement, for Gandhi's support in the party and throughout India was strong. Gandhi's closest colleagues had accepted partition as the best way out. A devastated Gandhi gave his assent.

On the day of the transfer of power, Gandhi did not celebrate independence with the rest of India, but was alone in Calcutta, mourning the partition and working to end the violence

It seems all the extra-ordinary power of leadership and all the moral and spiritual force, that Gandhi wielded, failed to work. Consent to the partition plan was an act of great irresponsibility and carelessness, it was a sort of an inhuman crime.

If we consider about the Indian history and the Indian culture and civilization, we will realise that India was NOT born as a Nation on 15 th august 1947 or even on the 26 th January 1950, though these two Days deserve our maximum regard and repect from us. Indeed, the Indian nation has grown several millenuims back, even prior to the period of Harappa and Mohenjo daro, which approximately dates back to 3300 BC in the minimum. Especially the Rig Veda, the first of the Vedas, indicate that the Indian culture is even 20000 years old.

"The actual date of these ancient scriptures is a nebulous topic. Yet, the description of an extremely cold climate leads some to believe that the Vedas are close to 20,000 years old, but there are some modern scholars who think that the number is exaggerated and should be about 5000. No matter what the age, it is the belief by many these texts were and are the oldest in the world. They express philosophies, realities and truths about life. The texts themselves show that the collection is the result of the work of generations of poets, extending over many centuries."

Therefore, if we respect India and the Indian culture and civilization, we cannot and should not say that India was born as a new Nation and that Gandhi was the Father of the Nation. There is no justification in calling the Mahatma 'the Father of the Nation'.

George Washington is regarded as the Father of the Nation with regard to the US, as he really rebuilt the new Nation of American states. He was the first President and US had no past. He unified the US. But with India, the situation is just the opposite. And, alas, India was not unified, rather, it was split into three parts.

India is vast and great, spiritually, culturally and in civilization, and the Indian civilization is one of the most ancient ones, that the epithet clearly looks unjustified. India is so vast and great and so ancient that to call any one of the leaders with the said epithet will be a gross mistake. Any of the leaders, however great, does not fit in. That will mislead the future citizens of India to have a wrong understanding about the Nation that India is, the Nation that appeared as a Mother to Bankim Chandra and then Sri Aurobindo, who said: vande mataram.

9

Rabindra Nath Tagore

VOICE OF BENGAL

Rabindranath Tagore, who died in 1941 at the age of eighty, is a towering figure in the millennium-old literature of Bengal. Anyone who becomes familiar with this large and flourishing tradition will be impressed by the power of Tagore's presence in Bangladesh and in India. His poetry as well as his novels, short stories, and essays are very widely read, and the songs he composed reverberate around the eastern part of India and throughout Bangladesh.

In contrast, in the rest of the world, especially in Europe and America, the excitement that Tagore's writings created in the early years of the twentieth century has largely vanished. The enthusiasm with which his work was once greeted was quite remarkable. *Gitanjali,* a selection of his poetry for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913, was published in English translation in London in March of that year, and had been reprinted ten times by November, when the award was announced. But he is not much read now in the West, and already by 1937, Graham Greene was able to say: "As for Rabindranath Tagore, I cannot believe that anyone but Mr. Yeats can still take his poems very seriously."

THE MYSTIC

The contrast between Tagore's commanding presence in Bengali literature and culture, and his near-total eclipse in the rest of the world, is perhaps less interesting than the distinction between

the view of Tagore as a deeply relevant and many-sided contemporary thinker in Bangladesh and India, and his image in the West as a repetitive and remote spiritualist. Graham Greene had, in fact, gone on to explain that he associated Tagore "with what Chesterton calls 'the bright pebbly eyes' of the Theosophists." Certainly, an air of mysticism played some part in the "selling" of Rabindranath Tagore to the West by Yeats, Ezra Pound, and his other early champions. Even Anna Akhmatova, one of Tagore's few later admirers (who translated his poems into Russian in the mid-1960s), talks of "that mighty flow of poetry which takes its strength from Hinduism as from the Ganges, and is called Rabindranath Tagore."

CULTURAL CONFLUENCE

Rabindranath did come from a Hindu family—one of the landed gentry who owned estates mostly in what is now Bangladesh. But whatever wisdom there might be in Akhmatova's invoking of Hinduism and the Ganges, it did not prevent the largely Muslim citizens of Bangladesh from having a deep sense of identity with Tagore and his ideas. Nor did it stop the newly independent Bangladesh from choosing one of Tagore's songs—the "Amar Sonar Bangla" which means "my golden Bengal"—as its national anthem. This must be very confusing to those who see the contemporary world as a "clash of civilizations"—with "the Muslim civilization," "the Hindu civilization," and "the Western civilization," each forcefully confronting the others. They would also be confused by Rabindranath Tagore's own description of his Bengali family as the product of "a confluence of three cultures: Hindu, Mohammedan, and British".

Rabindranath's grandfather, Dwarkanath, was well known for his command of Arabic and Persian, and Rabindranath grew up in a family atmosphere in which a deep knowledge of Sanskrit and ancient Hindu texts was combined with an understanding of Islamic traditions as well as Persian literature. It is not so much that Rabindranath tried to produce—or had an interest in producing—a "synthesis" of the different religions (as the great Moghul emperor Akbar tried hard to achieve) as that his outlook was persistently non-sectarian, and his writings—some two

hundred books—show the influence of different parts of the Indian cultural background as well as of the rest of the world.

ABODE OF PEACE

Most of his work was written at Santiniketan (Abode of Peace), the small town that grew around the school he founded in Bengal in 1901, and he not only conceived there an imaginative and innovative system of education, but through his writings and his influence on students and teachers, he was able to use the school as a base from which he could take a major part in India's social, political, and cultural movements.

The profoundly original writer, whose elegant prose and magical poetry Bengali readers know well, is not the sermonizing spiritual guru admired—and then rejected—in London. Tagore was not only an immensely versatile poet; he was also a great short story writer, novelist, playwright, essayist, and composer of songs, as well as a talented painter whose pictures, with their mixture of representation and abstraction, are only now beginning to receive the acclaim that they have long deserved. His essays, moreover, ranged over literature, politics, culture, social change, religious beliefs, philosophical analysis, international relations, and much else. The coincidence of the fiftieth anniversary of Indian independence with the publication of a selection of Tagore's letters by Cambridge University Press, brought Tagore's ideas and reflections to the fore, which makes it important to examine what kind of leadership in thought and understanding he provided in the Indian subcontinent in the first half of this century.

GANDHI AND TAGORE

Since Rabindranath Tagore and Mohandas Gandhi were two leading Indian thinkers in the twentieth century, many commentators have tried to compare their ideas. On learning of Rabindranath's death, Jawaharlal Nehru, then incarcerated in a British jail in India, wrote in his prison diary for August 7, 1941:

> *"Gandhi and Tagore. Two types entirely different from each other, and yet both of them typical of India, both in the long line of India's great men... It is not so much because of any single virtue but because of the* tout ensemble, *that I felt that*

among the world's great men today Gandhi and Tagore were supreme as human beings. What good fortune for me to have come into close contact with them."

Romain Rolland was fascinated by the contrast between them, and when he completed his book on Gandhi, he wrote to an Indian academic, in March 1923: "I have finished my *Gandhi*, in which I pay tribute to your two great river-like souls, overflowing with divine spirit, Tagore and Gandhi." The following month, he recorded in his diary an account of some of the differences between Gandhi and Tagore written by Reverend C.F. Andrews, the English clergyman and public activist who was a close friend of both men (and whose important role in Gandhi's life in South Africa as well as India is well portrayed in Richard Attenborough's film Gandhi [1982]). Andrews described to Rolland a discussion between Tagore and Gandhi, at which he was present, on subjects that divided them:

"The first subject of discussion was idols; Gandhi defended them, believing the masses incapable of raising themselves immediately to abstract ideas. Tagore cannot bear to see the people eternally treated as a child. Gandhi quoted the great things achieved in Europe by the flag as an idol; Tagore found it easy to object, but Gandhi held his ground, contrasting European flags bearing eagles, etc., with his own, on which he has put a spinning wheel. The second point of discussion was nationalism, which Gandhi defended. He said that one must go through nationalism to reach internationalism, in the same way that one must go through war to reach peace."

Tagore greatly admired Gandhi but he had many disagreements with him on a variety of subjects, including nationalism, patriotism, the importance of cultural exchange, the role of rationality and of science, and the nature of economic and social development. These differences, I shall argue, have a clear and consistent pattern, with Tagore pressing for more room for reasoning, and for a less traditionalist view, a greater interest in the rest of the world, and more respect for science and for objectivity generally.

Rabindranath knew that he could not have given India the political leadership that Gandhi provided, and he was never stingy

in his praise for what Gandhi did for the nation (it was, in fact, Tagore who popularized the term "Mahatma"—great soul—as a description of Gandhi). And yet each remained deeply critical of many things that the other stood for. That Mahatma Gandhi has received incomparably more attention outside India and also within much of India itself makes it important to understand "Tagore's side" of the Gandhi-Tagore debates.

In his prison diary, Nehru wrote: "Perhaps it is as well that [Tagore] died now and did not see the many horrors that are likely to descend in increasing measure on the world and on India. He had seen enough and he was infinitely sad and unhappy." Toward the end of his life, Tagore was indeed becoming discouraged about the state of India, especially as its normal burden of problems, such as hunger and poverty, was being supplemented by politically organized incitement to "communal" violence between Hindus and Muslims. This conflict would lead in 1947, six years after Tagore's death, to the widespread killing that took place during partition; but there was much gore already during his declining days. In December 1939, he wrote to his friend Leonard Elmhirst, the English philanthropist and social reformer who had worked closely with him on rural reconstruction in India (and who had gone on to found the Dartington Hall Trust in England and a progressive school at Dartington that explicitly invoked Rabindranath's educational ideals):

"It does not need a defeatist to feel deeply anxious about the future of millions who, with all their innate culture and their peaceful traditions are being simultaneously subjected to hunger, disease, exploitations foreign and indigenous, and the seething discontents of communalism."

How would Tagore have viewed the India of today? Would he see progress there, or wasted opportunity, perhaps even a betrayal of its promise and conviction? And, on a wider subject, how would he react to the spread of cultural separatism in the contemporary world?

EAST AND WEST

Given the vast range of his creative achievements, perhaps the most astonishing aspect of the image of Tagore in the West

is its narrowness; he is recurrently viewed as "the great mystic from the East," an image with a putative message for the West, which some would welcome, others dislike, and still others find deeply boring. To a great extent this Tagore was the West's own creation, part of its tradition of message-seeking from the East, particularly from India, which—as Hegel put it—had "existed for millennia in the imagination of the Europeans." Friedrich Schlegel, Schelling, Herder, and Schopenhauer were only a few of the thinkers who followed the same pattern. They theorized, at first, that India was the source of superior wisdom. Schopenhauer at one stage even argued that the New Testament "must somehow be of Indian origin: this is attested by its completely Indian ethics, which transforms morals into asceticism, its pessimism, and its avatar," in "the person of Christ." But then they rejected their own theories with great vehemence, sometimes blaming India for not living up to their unfounded expectations.

We can imagine that Rabindranath's physical appearance—handsome, bearded, dressed in non-Western clothes—may, to some extent, have encouraged his being seen as a carrier of exotic wisdom. Yasunari Kawabata, the first Japanese Nobel Laureate in Literature, treasured memories from his middle-school days of "this sage-like poet":

> *His white hair flowed softly down both sides of his forehead; the tufts of hair under the temples also were long like two beards, and linking up with the hair on his cheeks, continued into his beard, so that he gave an impression, to the boy I was then, of some ancient Oriental wizard.*

That appearance would have been well-suited to the selling of Tagore in the West as a quintessentially mystical poet, and it could have made it somewhat easier to pigeonhole him. Commenting on Rabindranath's appearance, Frances Cornford told William Rothenstein, "I can now imagine a powerful and gentle Christ, which I never could before." Beatrice Webb, who did not like Tagore and resented what she took to be his "quite obvious dislike of all that the Webbs stand for" (there is, in fact, little evidence that Tagore had given much thought to this subject), said that he was "beautiful to look at" and that "his speech has the perfect intonation and slow chant-like moderation of the

dramatic saint." Ezra Pound and W. B. Yeats, among others, first led the chorus of adoration in the Western appreciation of Tagore, and then soon moved to neglect and even shrill criticism. The contrast between Yeats's praise of his work in 1912 ("These lyrics…display in their thought a world I have dreamed of all my life long," "the work of a supreme culture") and his denunciation in 1935 ("Damn Tagore") arose partly from the inability of Tagore's many-sided writings to fit into the narrow box in which Yeats wanted to place—and keep—him. Certainly, Tagore did write a huge amount, and published ceaselessly, even in English (sometimes in indifferent English translation), but Yeats was also bothered, it is clear, by the difficulty of fitting Tagore's later writings into the image Yeats had presented to the West. Tagore, he had said, was the product of "a whole people, a whole civilization, immeasurably strange to us," and yet "we have met our own image,…or heard, perhaps for the first time in literature, our voice as in a dream."

Yeats did not totally reject his early admiration (as Ezra Pound and several others did), and he included some of Tagore's early poems in *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse,* which he edited in 1936. Yeats also had some favorable things to say about Tagore's prose writings. His censure of Tagore's later poems was reinforced by his dislike of Tagore's own English translations of his work ("Tagore does not know English, no Indian knows English," Yeats explained), unlike the English version of *Gitanjali* which Yeats had himself helped to prepare. Poetry is, of course, notoriously difficult to translate, and anyone who knows Tagore's poems in their original Bengali cannot feel satisfied with any of the translations (made with or without Yeats's help). Even the translations of his prose works suffer, to some extent, from distortion. E.M. Forster noted, in a review of a translation of one of Tagore's great Bengali novels, *The Home and the World,* in 1919: "The theme is so beautiful," but the charms have "vanished in translation," or perhaps "in an experiment that has not quite come off."

Tagore himself played a somewhat bemused part in the boom and bust of his English reputation. He accepted the extravagant praise with much surprise as well as pleasure, and then received denunciations with even greater surprise, and barely concealed

pain. Tagore was sensitive to criticism, and was hurt by even the most far-fetched accusations, such as the charge that he was getting credit for the work of Yeats, who had "rewritten" Gitanjali. (This charge was made by a correspondent for The Times, Sir Valentine Chirol, whom E.M. Forster once described as "an old Anglo-Indian reactionary hack.") From time to time Tagore also protested the crudity of some of his overexcited advocates. He wrote to C.F. Andrews in 1920: "These people…are like drunkards who are afraid of their lucid intervals."

GOD AND OTHERS

Yeats was not wrong to see a large religious element in Tagore's writings. He certainly had interesting and arresting things to say about life and death. Susan Owen, the mother of Wilfred Owen, wrote to Rabindranath in 1920, describing her last conversations with her son before he left for the war which would take his life. Wilfred said goodbye with "those wonderful words of yours—beginning at 'When I go from hence, let this be my parting word.'" When Wilfred's pocket notebook was returned to his mother, she found "these words written in his dear writing—with your name beneath."

The idea of a direct, joyful, and totally fearless relationship with God can be found in many of Tagore's religious writings, including the poems of *Gitanjali.* From India's diverse religious traditions he drew many ideas, both from ancient texts and from popular poetry. But "the bright pebbly eyes of the Theosophists" do not stare out of his verses. Despite the archaic language of the original translation of *Gitanjali,* which did not, I believe, help to preserve the simplicity of the original, its elementary humanity comes through more clearly than any complex and intense spirituality:

Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut?

Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. An ambiguity about religious experience is central to many of Tagore's devotional poems, and makes them appeal to readers irrespective of their beliefs; but excessively detailed interpretation can ruinously strip away that ambiguity. This applies particularly to his many poems which combine images of human love and those of pious devotion. Tagore writes:

I have no sleep to-night. Ever and again I open my door and look out on the darkness, my friend!

I can see nothing before me. I wonder where lies thy path!

By what dim shore of the ink-black river, by what far edge of the frowning forest, through what mazy depth of gloom, art thou threading thy course to come to see me, my friend?

I suppose it could be helpful to be told, as Yeats hastens to explain, that "the servant or the bride awaiting the master's home-coming in the empty house" is "among the images of the heart turning to God." But in Yeats's considerate attempt to make sure that the reader does not miss the "main point," something of the enigmatic beauty of the Bengali poem is lost-even what had survived the antiquated language of the English translation. Tagore certainly had strongly held religious beliefs (of an unusually nondenominational kind), but he was interested in a great many other things as well and had many different things to say about them.

Some of the ideas he tried to present were directly political, and they figure rather prominently in his letters and lectures. He had practical, plainly expressed views about nationalism, war and peace, cross-cultural education, freedom of the mind, the importance of rational criticism, the need for openness, and so on. His admirers in the West, however, were tuned to the more otherworldly themes which had been emphasized by his first Western patrons. People came to his public lectures in Europe and America, expecting ruminations on grand, transcendental themes; when they heard instead his views on the way public leaders should behave, there was some resentment, particularly (as E.P. Thompson reports) when he delivered political criticism "at $700 a scold."

REASONING IN FREEDOM

For Tagore it was of the highest importance that people be able to live, and reason, in freedom. His attitudes toward politics and culture, nationalism and internationalism, tradition and modernity, can all be seen in the light of this belief. Nothing, perhaps, expresses his values as clearly as a poem in *Gitanjali:*

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;...

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;...

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

Rabindranath's qualified support for nationalist movements—and his opposition to the unfreedom of alien rule—came from this commitment. So did his reservations about patriotism, which, he argued, can limit both the freedom to engage ideas from outside "narrow domestic walls" and the freedom also to support the causes of people in other countries. Rabindranath's passion for freedom underlies his firm opposition to unreasoned traditionalism, which makes one a prisoner of the past (lost, as he put it, in "the dreary desert sand of dead habit").

Tagore illustrates the tyranny of the past in his amusing yet deeply serious parable "Kartar Bhoot" ("The Ghost of the Leader"). As the respected leader of an imaginary land is about to die, his panic-stricken followers request him to stay on after his death to instruct them on what to do. He consents. But his followers find their lives are full of rituals and constraints on everyday behavior and are not responsive to the world around them. Ultimately, they request the ghost of the leader to relieve them of his domination, when he informs them that he exists only in their minds.

Tagore's deep aversion to any commitment to the past that could not be modified by contemporary reason extended even to the alleged virtue of invariably keeping past promises. On one occasion when Mahatma Gandhi visited Tagore's school at Santiniketan, a young woman got him to sign her autograph book.

Gandhi wrote: "Never make a promise in haste. Having once made it fulfill it at the cost of your life." When he saw this entry, Tagore became agitated. He wrote in the same book a short poem in Bengali to the effect that no one can be made "a prisoner forever with a chain of clay." He went on to conclude in English, possibly so that Gandhi could read it too, "Fling away your promise if it is found to be wrong."

Tagore had the greatest admiration for Mahatma Gandhi as a person and as a political leader, but he was also highly skeptical of Gandhi's form of nationalism and his conservative instincts regarding the country's past traditions. He never criticized Gandhi personally. In the 1938 essay, "Gandhi the Man," he wrote:

Great as he is as a politician, as an organizer, as a leader of men, as a moral reformer, he is greater than all these as a man, because none of these aspects and activities limits his humanity. They are rather inspired and sustained by it.

And yet there is a deep division between the two men. Tagore was explicit about his disagreement:

We who often glorify our tendency to ignore reason, installing in its place blind faith, valuing it as spiritual, are ever paying for its cost with the obscuration of our mind and destiny. I blamed Mahatmaji for exploiting this irrational force of credulity in our people, which might have had a quick result [in creating] a superstructure, while sapping the foundation. Thus began my estimate of Mahatmaji, as the guide of our nation, and it is fortunate for me that it did not end there.

But while it "did not end there," that difference of vision was a powerful divider. Tagore, for example, remained unconvinced of the merit of Gandhi's forceful advocacy that everyone should spin at home with the "charka," the primitive spinning wheel. For Gandhi this practice was an important part of India's self-realization. "The spinning-wheel gradually became," as his biographer B.R. Nanda writes, "the center of rural uplift in the Gandhian scheme of Indian economics." Tagore found the alleged economic rationale for this scheme quite unrealistic. As Romain Rolland noted, Rabindranath "never tires of criticizing the charka." In this economic judgment, Tagore was probably right. Except for

the rather small specialized market for high-quality spun cloth, it is hard to make economic sense of hand-spinning, even with wheels less primitive than Gandhi's charka. Hand-spinning as a widespread activity can survive only with the help of heavy government subsidies. However, Gandhi's advocacy of the charka was not based only on economics. He wanted everyone to spin for "thirty minutes every day as a sacrifice," seeing this as a way for people who are better off to identify themselves with the less fortunate. He was impatient with Tagore's refusal to grasp this point:

The poet lives for the morrow, and would have us do likewise…. "Why should I, who have no need to work for food, spin?" may be the question asked. Because I am eating what does not belong to me. I am living on the spoliation of my countrymen. Trace the source of every coin that finds its way into your pocket, and you will realise the truth of what I write. Every one must spin. Let Tagore spin like the others. Let him burn his foreign clothes; that is the duty today. God will take care of the morrow.

If Tagore had missed something in Gandhi's argument, so did Gandhi miss the point of Tagore's main criticism. It was not only that the charka made little economic sense, but also, Tagore thought, that it was not the way to make people reflect on anything: "The charka does not require anyone to think; one simply turns the wheel of the antiquated invention endlessly, using the minimum of judgment and stamina."

CELIBACY AND PERSONAL LIFE

Tagore and Gandhi's attitudes toward personal life were also quite different. Gandhi was keen on the virtues of celibacy, theorized about it, and, after some years of conjugal life, made a private commitment—publicly announced—to refrain from sleeping with his wife. Rabindranath's own attitude on this subject was very different, but he was gentle about their disagreements:

> *[Gandhiji] condemns sexual life as inconsistent with the moral progress of man, and has a horror of sex as great as that of the author of* The Kreutzer Sonata, *but, unlike Tolstoy, he betrays no abhorrence of the sex that tempts his kind. In fact, his tenderness for women is one of the noblest and most consistent traits of his character, and he counts among the women of his country some of his best and truest comrades in the great movement he is leading.*

Tagore's personal life was, in many ways, an unhappy one. He married in 1883, lost his wife in 1902, and never remarried. He sought close companionship, which he did not always get (perhaps even during his married life—he wrote to his wife, Mrinalini: "If you and I could be comrades in all our work and in all our thoughts it would be splendid, but we cannot attain all that we desire"). He maintained a warm friendship with, and a strong Platonic attachment to, the literature-loving wife, Kadambari, of his elder brother, Jyotirindranath. He dedicated some poems to her before his marriage, and several books afterward, some after her death (she committed suicide, for reasons that are not fully understood, at the age of twenty-five, four months after Rabindranath's wedding). Much later in life, during his tour of Argentina in 1924-1925, Rabindranath came to know the talented and beautiful Victoria Ocampo, who later became the publisher of the literary magazine *Sur*. They became close friends, but it appears that Rabindranath deflected the possibility of a passionate relationship into a confined intellectual one. His friend Leonard Elmhirst, who accompanied Rabindranath on his Argentine tour, wrote:

Besides having a keen intellectual understanding of his books, she was in love with him—but instead of being content to build a friendship on the basis of intellect, she was in a hurry to establish that kind of proprietary right over him which he absolutely would not brook.

Ocampo and Elmhirst, while remaining friendly, were both quite rude in what they wrote about each other. Ocampo's book on Tagore (of which a Bengali translation was made from the Spanish by the distinguished poet and critic Shankha Ghosh) is primarily concerned with Tagore's writings but also discusses the pleasures and difficulties of their relationship, giving quite a different account from Elmhirst's, and never suggesting any sort of proprietary intentions.

Victoria Ocampo, however, makes it clear that she very much wanted to get physically closer to Rabindranath: "Little by little

he [Tagore] partially tamed the young animal, by turns wild and docile, who did not sleep, dog-like, on the floor outside his door, simply because it was not done." Rabindranath, too, was clearly very much attracted to her. He called her "Vijaya" (the Sanskrit equivalent of Victoria), dedicated a book of poems to her, Purabi—an "evening melody," and expressed great admiration for her mind ("like a star that was distant"). In a letter to her he wrote, as if to explain his own reticence:

> *When we were together, we mostly played with words and tried to laugh away our best opportunities to see each other clearly... Whenever there is the least sign of the nest becoming a jealous rival of the sky [,] my mind, like a migrant bird, tries to take... flight to a distant shore.*

Five years later, during Tagore's European tour in 1930, he sent her a cable: "Will you not come and see me." She did. But their relationship did not seem to go much beyond conversation, and their somewhat ambiguous correspondence continued over the years. Written in 1940, a year before his death at eighty, one of the poems in Sesh Lekha ("Last Writings"), seems to be about her: "How I wish I could once again find my way to that foreign land where waits for me the message of love!/… Her language I knew not, but what her eyes said will forever remain eloquent in its anguish." However indecisive, or confused, or awkward Rabindranath may have been, he certainly did not share Mahatma Gandhi's censorious views of sex. In fact, when it came to social policy, he advocated contraception and family planning while Gandhi preferred abstinence.

EDUCATIONAL IDEAS

Rabindranath Tagore's role in the innovation of educational ideas has been eclipsed by his fame as a poet. He was a pioneer in the field of education. For the last forty years of his life he was content to be a schoolmaster in humble rural surroundings, even when he had achieved fame such as no Indian had known before. He was one of the first, in India, to think out for himself and put in practice principles of education which have now become commonplace of educational theory, if not yet of practice. Today we all know that what the child imbibes at home and in school

is far more important than what he studies at college, that the teaching is more easily and naturally communicated through the child's mother-tongue than through an alien medium, that learning through activity is more real than through the written word, that wholesome education consists in training of all the senses along with the mind instead of cramming the brain with memorized knowledge, that culture is something much more than academic knowledge.

But few of Rabindranath's countrymen took notice of him when he made his first experiments in education in 1901 with less than half a dozen pupils. A poet's whim, thought most of them. Even today few of his countrymen understand the significance of these principles in their national life. The schoolmaster is still the most neglected member of our community, despite the fact that Rabindranath attached more merit to what he taught to children in his school than to the Hibbert lectures he delivered before the distinguished audience at Oxfoard.

Mahatma Gandhi adopted the scheme of teaching through crafts many years after Rabindranath had worked it out at Santiniketan. In fact the Mahatma imported his first teachers for his basic School from Santiniketan.

If Rabindranath had done nothing else, what he did at Santiniketan and Sriniketan would be sufficient to rank him as one of the India's greatest nation-builders.

With the years, Rabindranath had won the world and the world in turn had won him. He sought his home everywhere in the world and would bring the world to his home. And so the little school for children at Santiniketan became a world university, Visva-Bharati, a centre for Indian Culture, a seminary for Eastern Studies and a meeting-place of the East and West. The poet selected for its motto an ancient Sanskrit verse, *Yatra visvam bhavatieka nidam*, which means, "Where the whole world meets in a single nest."

"Visva-Bharati", he declared, " *represents India where she has her wealth of mind which is for all. Visva-Bharati acknowledges India's obligation to offer to others the hospitality of her best culture and India's right to accept from others their best*."

In 1940 a year before he died, he put a letter in Gandhi's hand, *"Visva-Bharati is like a vessel which is carrying the cargo of my life's best treasure, and I hope it may claim special care from my countrymen for its preservation."*

SCIENCE AND THE PEOPLE

Gandhi and Tagore severely clashed over their totally different attitudes toward science. In January 1934, Bihar was struck by a devastating earthquake, which killed thousands of people. Gandhi, who was then deeply involved in the fight against untouchability (the barbaric system inherited from India's divisive past, in which "lowly people" were kept at a physical distance), extracted a positive lesson from the tragic event. "A man like me," Gandhi argued, "cannot but believe this earthquake is a divine chastisement sent by God for our sins" — in particular the sins of untouchability. "For me there is a vital connection between the Bihar calamity and the untouchability campaign."

Tagore, who equally abhorred untouchability and had joined Gandhi in the movements against it, protested against this interpretation of an event that had caused suffering and death to so many innocent people, including children and babies. He also hated the epistemology implicit in seeing an earthquake as caused by ethical failure. "It is," he wrote, "all the more unfortunate because this kind of unscientific view of [natural] phenomena is too readily accepted by a large section of our countrymen."

The two remained deeply divided over their attitudes toward science. However, while Tagore believed that modern science was essential to the understanding of physical phenomena, his views on epistemology were interestingly heterodox.

He did not take the simple "realist" position often associated with modern science. The report of his conversation with Einstein, published in The New York Times in 1930, shows how insistent Tagore was on interpreting truth through observation and reflective concepts.

To assert that something is true or untrue in the absence of anyone to observe or perceive its truth, or to form a conception of what it is, appeared to Tagore to be deeply questionable. When

Einstein remarked, "If there were no human beings any more, the Apollo Belvedere no longer would be beautiful?" Tagore simply replied, "No." Going further—and into much more interesting territory—Einstein said, "I agree with regard to this conception of beauty, but not with regard to truth." Tagore's response was: "Why not? Truth is realized through men."

Tagore's epistemology, which he never pursued systematically, would seem to be searching for a line of reasoning that would later be elegantly developed by Hilary Putnam, who has argued: "Truth depends on conceptual schemes and it is nonetheless 'real truth.'" Tagore himself said little to explain his convictions, but it is important to take account of his heterodoxy, not only because his speculations were invariably interesting, but also because they illustrate how his support for any position, including his strong interest in science, was accompanied by critical scrutiny.

NATIONALISM AND COLONIALISM

Tagore was predictably hostile to communal sectarianism (such as a Hindu orthodoxy that was antagonistic to Islamic, Christian, or Sikh perspectives). But even nationalism seemed to him to be suspect. Isaiah Berlin summarizes well Tagore's complex position on Indian nationalism:

> *Tagore stood fast on the narrow causeway, and did not betray his vision of the difficult truth. He condemned romantic overattachment to the past, what he called the tying of India to the past "like a sacrificial goat tethered to a post," and he accused men who displayed it-they seemed to him reactionary-of not knowing what true political freedom was, pointing out that it is from English thinkers and English books that the very notion of political liberty was derived. But against cosmopolitanism he maintained that the English stood on their own feet, and so must Indians. In 1917 he once more denounced the danger of 'leaving everything to the unalterable will of the Master,' be he brahmin or Englishman.*

The duality Berlin points to is well reflected also in Tagore's attitude toward cultural diversity. He wanted Indians to learn what is going on elsewhere, how others lived, what they valued,

and so on, while remaining interested and involved in their own culture and heritage. Indeed, in his educational writings the need for synthesis is strongly stressed. It can also be found in his advice to Indian students abroad.

In 1907 he wrote to his son-in-law Nagendranath Gangulee, who had gone to America to study agriculture:

> *To get on familiar terms with the local people is a part of your education. To know only agriculture is not enough; you must know America too. Of course if, in the process of knowing America, one begins to lose one's identity and falls into the trap of becoming an Americanised person contemptuous of everything Indian, it is preferable to stay in a locked room.*

Tagore was strongly involved in protest against the Raj on a number of occasions, most notably in the movement to resist the 1905 British proposal to split in two the province of Bengal, a plan that was eventually withdrawn following popular resistance. He was forthright in denouncing the brutality of British rule in India, never more so than after the Amritsar massacre of April 13, 1919, when 379 unarmed people at a peaceful meeting were gunned down by the army, and two thousand more were wounded. Between April 23 and 26, Rabindranath wrote five agitated letters to C.F. Andrews, who himself was extremely disturbed, especially after he was told by a British civil servant in India that thanks to this show of strength, the "moral prestige" of the Raj had "never been higher."

A month after the massacre, Tagore wrote to the Viceroy of India, asking to be relieved of the knighthood he had accepted four years earlier:

> *The disproportionate severity of the punishments inflicted upon the unfortunate people and the methods of carrying them out, we are convinced, are without parallel in the history of civilized governments, barring some conspicuous exceptions, recent and remote. Considering that such treatment has been meted out to a population, disarmed and resourceless, by a power which has the most terribly efficient organisation for destruction of human lives, we must strongly assert that it can claim no political expediency, far less moral justification.... The universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of our people has been ignored by our rulers-possibly congratulating themselves for imparting what they imagine as salutary lessons…. I for my part want to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen who for their so-called insignificance are liable to suffer a degradation not fit for human beings.*

Both Gandhi and Nehru expressed their appreciation of the important part Tagore took in the national struggle. It is fitting that after independence, India chose a song of Tagore ("Jana Gana Mana Adhinayaka," which can be roughly translated as "the leader of people's minds") as its national anthem. Since Bangladesh would later choose another song of Tagore ("Amar Sonar Bangla") as its national anthem, he may be the only one ever to have authored the national anthems of two different countries.

Tagore's criticism of the British administration of India was consistently strong and grew more intense over the years. This point is often missed, since he made a special effort to dissociate his criticism of the Raj from any denigration of British—or Western—people and culture. Mahatma Gandhi's well-known quip in reply to a question, asked in England, on what he thought of Western civilization ("It would be a good idea") could not have come from Tagore's lips. He would understand the provocations to which Gandhi was responding-involving cultural conceit as well as imperial tyranny. D.H. Lawrence supplied a fine example of the former: "I become more and more surprised to see how far higher, in reality, our European civilization stands than the East, Indian and Persian, ever dreamed of…. This fraud of looking up to them—this wretched worship-of-Tagore attitude is disgusting." But, unlike Gandhi, Tagore could not, even in jest, be dismissive of Western civilization.

Even in his powerful indictment of British rule in India in 1941, in a lecture which he gave on his last birthday, and which was later published as a pamphlet under the title *Crisis in Civilization*, he strains hard to maintain the distinction between opposing Western imperialism and rejecting Western civilization. While he saw India as having been "smothered under the dead weight of British administration" (adding "another great and

ancient civilization for whose recent tragic history the British cannot disclaim responsibility is China"), Tagore recalls what India has gained from "discussions centred upon Shakespeare's drama and Byron's poetry and above all…the large-hearted liberalism of nineteenth-century English politics." The tragedy, as Tagore saw it, came from the fact that what "was truly best in their own civilization, the upholding of dignity of human relationships, has no place in the British administration of this country." "If in its place they have established, baton in hand, a reign of 'law and order,' or in other words a policeman's rule, such a mockery of civilization can claim no respect from us."

PATRIOTISM AND ITS CRITICS

Rabindranath rebelled against the strongly nationalist form that the independence movement often took, and this made him refrain from taking a particularly active part in contemporary politics. He wanted to assert India's right to be independent without denying the importance of what India could learn—freely and profitably—from abroad. He was afraid that a rejection of the West in favor of an indigenous Indian tradition was not only limiting in itself; it could easily turn into hostility to other influences from abroad, including Christianity, which came to parts of India by the fourth century; Judaism, which came through Jewish immigration shortly after the fall of Jerusalem, as did Zoroastrianism through Parsi immigration later on (mainly in the eighth century), and, of course—and most importantly—Islam, which has had a very strong presence in India since the tenth century.

Tagore's criticism of patriotism is a persistent theme in his writings. As early as 1908, he put his position succinctly in a letter replying to the criticism of Abala Bose, the wife of a great Indian scientist, Jagadish Chandra Bose: "Patriotism cannot be our final spiritual shelter; my refuge is humanity. I will not buy glass for the price of diamonds, and I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live." His novel *Ghare Baire* (The Home and the World) has much to say about this theme. In the novel, Nikhil, who is keen on social reform, including women's liberation, but cool toward nationalism, gradually loses the esteem of his

spirited wife, Bimala, because of his failure to be enthusiastic about anti-British agitations, which she sees as a lack of patriotic commitment. Bimala becomes fascinated with Nikhil's nationalist friend Sandip, who speaks brilliantly and acts with patriotic militancy, and she falls in love with him. Nikhil refuses to change his views: "I am willing to serve my country; but my worship I reserve for Right which is far greater than my country. To worship my country as a god is to bring a curse upon it."

As the story unfolds, Sandip becomes angry with some of his countrymen for their failure to join the struggle as readily as he thinks they should ("Some Mohamedan traders are still obdurate"). He arranges to deal with the recalcitrants by burning their meager trading stocks and physically attacking them. Bimala has to acknowledge the connection between Sandip's rousing nationalistic sentiments and his sectarian-and ultimately violent-actions. The dramatic events that follow (Nikhil attempts to help the victims, risking his life) include the end of Bimala's political romance.

This is a difficult subject, and Satyajit Ray's beautiful film of *The Home and the World* brilliantly brings out the novel's tensions, along with the human affections and disaffections of the story. Not surprisingly, the story has had many detractors, not just among dedicated nationalists in India. Georg Lukács found Tagore's novel to be "a petit bourgeois yarn of the shoddiest kind," "at the intellectual service of the British police," and "a contemptible caricature of Gandhi." It would, of course, be absurd to think of Sandip as Gandhi, but the novel gives a "strong and gentle" warning, as Bertolt Brecht noted in his diary, of the corruptibility of nationalism, since it is not even-handed. Hatred of one group can lead to hatred of others, no matter how far such feeling may be from the minds of large-hearted nationalist leaders like Mahatma Gandhi.

ADMIRATION AND CRITICISM OF JAPAN

Tagore's reaction to nationalism in Japan is particularly telling. As in the case of India, he saw the need to build the self-confidence of a defeated and humiliated people, of people left behind by developments elsewhere, as was the case in Japan before its emergence during the nineteenth century. At the beginning of one

of his lectures in Japan in 1916 ("Nationalism in Japan"), he observed that "the worst form of bondage is the bondage of dejection, which keeps men hopelessly chained in loss of faith in themselves."

Tagore shared the admiration for Japan widespread in Asia for demonstrating the ability of an Asian nation to rival the West in industrial development and economic progress. He noted with great satisfaction that Japan had "in giant strides left centuries of inaction behind, overtaking the present time in its foremost achievement." For other nations outside the West, he said, Japan "has broken the spell under which we lay in torpor for ages, taking it to be the normal condition of certain races living in certain geographical limits."

But then Tagore went on to criticize the rise of a strong nationalism in Japan, and its emergence as an imperialist nation. Tagore's outspoken criticisms did not please Japanese audiences and, as E.P. Thompson wrote, "the welcome given to him on his first arrival soon cooled." Twenty-two years later, in 1937, during the Japanese war on China, Tagore received a letter from Rash Behari Bose, an anti-British Indian revolutionary then living in Japan, who sought Tagore's approval for his efforts there on behalf of Indian independence, in which he had the support of the Japanese government. Tagore replied:

> *Your cable has caused me many restless hours, for it hurts me very much to have to ignore your appeal. I wish you had asked for my cooperation in a cause against which my spirit did not protest. I know, in making this appeal, you counted on my great regard for the Japanese for I, along with the rest of Asia, did once admire and look up to Japan and did once fondly hope that in Japan Asia had at last discovered its challenge to the West, that Japan's new strength would be consecrated in safeguarding the culture of the East against alien interests. But Japan has not taken long to betray that rising hope and repudiate all that seemed significant in her wonderful, and, to us symbolic, awakening, and has now become itself a worse menace to the defenceless peoples of the East.*

How to view Japan's position in the Second World War was a divisive issue in India. After the war, when Japanese political

leaders were tried for war crimes, the sole dissenting voice among the judges came from the Indian judge, Radhabinod Pal, a distinguished jurist. Pal dissented on various grounds, among them that no fair trial was possible in view of the asymmetry of power between the victor and the defeated. Ambivalent feelings in India toward the Japanese military aggression, given the unacceptable nature of British imperialism, possibly had a part in predisposing Pal to consider a perspective different from that of the other judges. More tellingly, Subhas Chandra Bose (no relation of Rash Behari Bose), a leading nationalist, made his way to Japan during the war via Italy and Germany after escaping from a British prison; he helped the Japanese to form units of Indian soldiers, who had earlier surrendered to the advancing Japanese army, to fight on the Japanese side as the "Indian National Army." Rabindranath had formerly entertained great admiration for Subhas Bose as a dedicated nonsectarian fighter for Indian independence. But their ways would have parted when Bose's political activities took this turn, although Tagore was dead by the time Bose reached Japan. Tagore saw Japanese militarism as illustrating the way nationalism can mislead even a nation of great achievement and promise. In 1938 Yone Noguchi, the distinguished poet and friend of Tagore (as well as of Yeats and Pound), wrote to Tagore, pleading with him to change his mind about Japan. Rabindranath's reply, written on September 12, 1938, was altogether uncompromising:

> *It seems to me that it is futile for either of us to try to convince the other, since your faith in the infallible right of Japan to bully other Asiatic nations into line with your Government's policy is not shared by me…. Believe me, it is sorrow and shame, not anger, that prompt me to write to you. I suffer intensely not only because the reports of Chinese suffering batter against my heart, but because I can no longer point out with pride the example of a great Japan.*

He would have been much happier with the postwar emergence of Japan as a peaceful power. Then, too, since he was not free of egotism, he would also have been pleased by the attention paid to his ideas by the novelist Yasunari Kawabata and others.

INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS

Tagore was not invariably well-informed about international politics. He allowed himself to be entertained by Mussolini in a short visit to Italy in May-June 1926, a visit arranged by Carlo Formichi, professor of Sanskrit at the University of Rome. When he asked to meet Benedetto Croce, Formichi said, "Impossible! Impossible!" Mussolini told him that Croce was "not in Rome." When Tagore said he would go "wherever he is," Mussolini assured him that Croce's whereabouts were unknown.

Such incidents, as well as warnings from Romain Rolland and other friends, should have ended Tagore's flirtation with Mussolini more quickly than it did. But only after he received graphic accounts of the brutality of Italian fascism from two exiles, Gaetano Salvemini and Gaetano Salvadori, and learned more of what was happening in Italy, did he publicly denounce the regime, publishing a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* in August. The next month, Popolo d'Italia, the magazine edited by Benito Mussolini's brother, replied: "Who cares? Italy laughs at Tagore and those who brought this unctuous and insupportable fellow in our midst."

With his high expectations of Britain, Tagore continued to be surprised by what he took to be a lack of official sympathy for international victims of aggression. He returned to this theme in the lecture he gave on his last birthday, in 1941:

> *While Japan was quietly devouring North China, her act of wanton aggression was ignored as a minor incident by the veterans of British diplomacy. We have also witnessed from this distance how actively the British statesmen acquiesced in the destruction of the Spanish Republic.*

But distinguishing between the British government and the British people, Rabindranath went on to note "with admiration how a band of valiant Englishmen laid down their lives for Spain."

Tagore's view of the Soviet Union has been a subject of much discussion. He was widely read in Russia. In 1917 several Russian translations of *Gitanjali* (one edited by Ivan Bunin, later the first Russian Nobel Laureate in Literature) were available, and by the late 1920s many of the English versions of his work had been rendered into Russian by several distinguished translators. Russian

versions of his work continued to appear: Boris Pasternak translated him in the 1950s and 1960s.

When Tagore visited Russia in 1930, he was much impressed by its development efforts and by what he saw as a real commitment to eliminate poverty and economic inequality. But what impressed him most was the expansion of basic education across the old Russian empire. In Letters from Russia, written in Bengali and published in 1931, he unfavorably compares the acceptance of widespread illiteracy in India by the British administration with Russian efforts to expand education:

> *In stepping on the soil of Russia, the first thing that caught my eye was that in education, at any rate, the peasant and the working classes have made such enormous progress in these few years that nothing comparable has happened even to our highest classes in the course of the last hundred and fifty years…. The people here are not at all afraid of giving complete education even to Turcomans of distant Asia; on the contrary, they are utterly in earnest about it.*

When parts of the book were translated into English in 1934, the under-secretary for India stated in Parliament that it was "calculated by distortion of the facts to bring the British Administration in India into contempt and disrepute," and the book was then promptly banned. The English version would not be published until after independence.

EDUCATION AND FREEDOM

The British Indian administrators were not, however, alone in trying to suppress Tagore's reflections on Russia. They were joined by Soviet officials. In an interview with *Izvestia* in 1930, Tagore sharply criticized the lack of freedom that he observed in Russia:

> *I must ask you: Are you doing your ideal a service by arousing in the minds of those under your training anger, class-hatred, and revengefulness against those whom you consider to be your enemies?… Freedom of mind is needed for the reception of truth; terror hopelessly kills it…. For the sake of humanity I hope you may never create a vicious force of violence, which will go on weaving an interminable chain of violence and cruelty….*

You have tried to destroy many of the other evils of [the czarist] period. Why not try to destroy this one also?

The interview was not published in *Izvestia* until 1988—nearly sixty years later. Tagore's reaction to the Russia of 1930 arose from two of his strongest commitments: his uncompromising belief in the importance of "freedom of mind" (the source of his criticism of the Soviet Union), and his conviction that the expansion of basic education is central to social progress (the source of his praise, particularly in contrast to British-run India). He identified the lack of basic education as the fundamental cause of many of India's social and economic afflictions:

In my view the imposing tower of misery which today rests on the heart of India has its sole foundation in the absence of education. Caste divisions, religious conflicts, aversion to work, precarious economic conditions-all centre on this single factor.

It was on education (and on the reflection, dialogue, and communication that are associated with it), rather than on, say, spinning "as a sacrifice" ("the charka does not require anyone to think"), that the future of India would depend.

Tagore was concerned not only that there be wider opportunities for education across the country (especially in rural areas where schools were few), but also that the schools themselves be more lively and enjoyable. He himself had dropped out of school early, largely out of boredom, and had never bothered to earn a diploma. He wrote extensively on how schools should be made more attractive to boys and girls and thus more productive. His own co-educational school at Santiniketan had many progressive features. The emphasis here was on self-motivation rather than on discipline, and on fostering intellectual curiosity rather than competitive excellence.

Much of Rabindranath's life was spent in developing the school at Santiniketan. The school never had much money, since the fees were very low. His lecture honoraria, "$700 a scold," went to support it, as well as most of his Nobel Prize money. The school received no support from the government, but did get help from private citizens—even Mahatma Gandhi raised money for it. The dispute with Mahatma Gandhi on the Bihar earthquake touched

on a subject that was very important to Tagore: the need for education in science as well as in literature and the humanities. At Santiniketan, there were strong "local" elements in its emphasis on Indian traditions, including the classics, and in the use of Bengali rather than English as the language of instruction. At the same time there were courses on a great variety of cultures, and study programs devoted to China, Japan, and the Middle East. Many foreigners came to Santiniketan to study or teach, and the fusion of studies seemed to work.

I am partial to seeing Tagore as an educator, having myself been educated at Santiniketan. The school was unusual in many different ways, such as the oddity that classes, excepting those requiring a laboratory, were held outdoors (whenever the weather permitted). No matter what we thought of Rabindranath's belief that one gains from being in a natural setting while learning (some of us argued about this theory), we typically found the experience of outdoor schooling extremely attractive and pleasant. Academically, our school was not particularly exacting (often we did not have any examinations at all), and it could not, by the usual academic standards, compete with some of the better schools in Calcutta. But there was something remarkable about the ease with which class discussions could move from Indian traditional literature to contemporary as well as classical Western thought, and then to the culture of China or Japan or elsewhere. The school's celebration of variety was also in sharp contrast with the cultural conservatism and separatism that has tended to grip India from time to time.

The cultural give and take of Tagore's vision of the contemporary world has close parallels with the vision of Satyajit Ray, also an alumnus of Santiniketan who made several films based on Tagore's stories. Ray's words about Santiniketan in 1991 would have greatly pleased Rabindranath:

In view of his interest in childhood education, Tagore would not be consoled by the extraordinary expansion of university education, in which India sends to its universities six times as many people per unit of population as does China. Rather, he would be stunned that, in contrast to East and Southeast Asia, including China, half the adult population and two thirds of

Indian women remain unable to read or write. Statistically reliable surveys indicate that even in the late 1980s, nearly half of the rural girls between the ages of twelve and fourteen did not attend any school for a single day of their lives.

This state of affairs is the result of the continuation of British imperial neglect of mass education, which has been reinforced by India's traditional elitism, as well as upper-class-dominated contemporary politics (except in parts of India such as Kerala, where anti-upper-caste movements have tended to concentrate on education as a great leveller). Tagore would see illiteracy and the neglect of education not only as the main source of India's continued social backwardness, but also as a great constraint that restricts the possibility and reach of economic development in India (as his writings on rural development forcefully make clear). Tagore would also have strongly felt the need for a greater commitment—and a greater sense of urgency—in removing endemic poverty.

At the same time, Tagore would undoubtedly find some satisfaction in the survival of democracy in India, in its relatively free press, and in general from the "freedom of mind" that post-independence Indian politics has, on the whole, managed to maintain. He would also be pleased by the fact noted by the historian E.P. Thompson (whose father Edward Thompson had written one of the first major biographies of Tagore:

> *All the convergent influences of the world run through this society: Hindu, Moslem, Christian, secular; Stalinist, liberal, Maoist, democratic socialist, Gandhian. There is not a thought that is being thought in the West or East that is not active in some Indian mind.*

Tagore would have been happy also to see that the one governmental attempt to dispense generally with basic liberties and political and civil rights in India, in the 1970s, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (ironically, herself a former student at Santiniketan) declared an "emergency," was overwhelmingly rejected by the Indian voters, leading to the precipitate fall of her government. Rabindranath would also see that the changes in policy that have eliminated famine since independence had much to do with the freedom to be heard in a democratic India. In

Tagore's play *Raja O Rani* ("The King and the Queen"), the sympathetic Queen eventually rebels against the callousness of state policy toward the hungry. She begins by inquiring about the ugly sounds outside the palace, only to be told that the noise is coming from "the coarse, clamorous crowd who howl unashamedly for food and disturb the sweet peace of the palace." The Viceregal office in India could have taken a similarly callous view of Indian famines, right up to the easily preventable Bengal famine of 1943, just before independence, which killed between two and three million people. But a government in a multi-party democracy, with elections and free newspapers, cannot any longer dismiss the noise from "the coarse, clamorous crowd."

Unlike Gandhi, Rabindranath would not resent the development of modern industries in India, or the acceleration of technical progress, since he did not want India to be shackled to the turning of "the wheel of an antiquated invention." Tagore was concerned that people not be dominated by machines, but he was not opposed to making good use of modern technology. "The mastery over the machine," he wrote in *Crisis in Civilization,* "by which the British have consolidated their sovereignty over their vast empire, has been kept a sealed book, to which due access has been denied to this helpless country." Rabindranath had a deep interest in the environment-he was particularly concerned about deforestation and initiated a "festival of tree-planting" (vriksha-ropana) as early as 1928. He would want increased private and government commitments to environmentalism; but he would not derive from this position a general case against modern industry and technology.

ON CULTURAL SEPARATION

Rabindranath would be shocked by the growth of cultural separatism in India, as elsewhere. The "openness" that he valued so much is certainly under great strain right now-in many countries. Religious fundamentalism still has a relatively small following in India; but various factions seem to be doing their best to increase their numbers. Certainly religious sectarianism has had much success in some parts of India (particularly in the west and the north). Tagore would see the expansion of religious sectarianism

as being closely associated with an artificially separatist view of culture.

He would have strongly resisted defining India in specifically Hindu terms, rather than as a "confluence" of many cultures. Even after the partition of 1947, India is still the third-largest Muslim country in the world, with more Muslims than in Bangladesh, and nearly as many as in Pakistan. Only Indonesia has substantially more followers of Islam. Indeed, by pointing to the immense heterogeneousness of India's cultural background and its richly diverse history, Tagore had argued that the "idea of India" itself militated against a culturally separatist view—"against the intense consciousness of the separateness of one's own people from others."

Tagore would also oppose the cultural nationalism that has recently been gaining some ground in India, along with an exaggerated fear of the influence of the West. He was uncompromising in his belief that human beings could absorb quite different cultures in constructive ways:

> *Whatever we understand and enjoy in human products instantly becomes ours, wherever they might have their origin. I am proud of my humanity when I can acknowledge the poets and artists of other countries as my own. Let me feel with unalloyed gladness that all the great glories of man are mine. Therefore it hurts me deeply when the cry of rejection rings loud against the West in my country with the clamour that Western education can only injure us.*

In this context, it is important to emphasize that Rabindranath was not short of pride in India's own heritage, and often spoke about it. He lectured at Oxford, with evident satisfaction, on the importance of India's religious ideas—quoting both from ancient texts and from popular poetry (such as the verses of the sixteenth-century Muslim poet Kabir). In 1940, when he was given an honorary doctorate by Oxford University, in a ceremony arranged at his own educational establishment in Santiniketan ("In Gangem Defluit Isis," Oxford helpfully explained), to the predictable "volley of Latin" Tagore responded "by a volley of Sanskrit," as Marjorie Sykes, a Quaker friend of Rabindranath, reports. Her cheerful summary of the match, "India held its own," was not out of line

with Tagore's pride in Indian culture. His welcoming attitude to Western civilization was reinforced by this confidence: he did not see India's culture as fragile and in need of "protection" from Western influence.

In India, he wrote, "circumstances almost compel us to learn English, and this lucky accident has given us the opportunity of access into the richest of all poetical literatures of the world." There seems to me much force in Rabindranath's argument for clearly distinguishing between the injustice of a serious asymmetry of power (colonialism being a prime example of this) and the importance nevertheless of appraising Western culture in an open-minded way, in colonial and postcolonial territories, in order to see what uses could be made of it.

Rabindranath insisted on open debate on every issue, and distrusted conclusions based on a mechanical formula, no matter how attractive that formula might seem in isolation (such as "This was forced on us by our colonial masters-we must reject it," "This is our tradition—we must follow it," "We have promised to do this—we must fulfill that promise," and so on). The question he persistently asks is whether we have reason enough to want what is being proposed, taking everything into account. Important as history is, reasoning has to go beyond the past. It is in the sovereignty of reasoning—fearless reasoning in freedom—that we can find Rabindranath Tagore's lasting voice.

Rabindranath Tagore's (1861-1941) reputation as a *rishi* (saint), *mahamanab* (superman), or *gurudeb* (divine mentor) has created a haze and a halo through which we can neither recognize the concrete human being of flesh and blood nor appreciate his emotional sensibilities in their proper perspectives. As such, a number of critics such as Ajitkumar Chakravarti, Srikumar Banerjee, Mohitlal Majumdar, or Charuchandra Banerjee either refused to consider the direct influence of the human experiences, especially his relationships with various women, on some of Rabindranath's greatest lyrical pieces, or considered any attempt to probe into them irrelevant, irreverent, or irresponsible. However, the distinguished Tagore scholar Pramathanath Bishi provided an explanation for his claim that Rabindranath's poems and lyrics dealing with love lack human intimacy. A distinct signature of

Tagore's love poems, Bishi goes on, is that they reveal sadness, disappointment, and compassion rather than passion, euphoria, or tumult of the heart.

If we pay heed to Buddhadeva Bose and Sankha Ghosh's sensible suggestion to read Rabindranath's poetry *qua* poetry *(kabitar uddeshe kabita)* and try not to analyze it either insisting on the contexts and causes of his works or ignoring their human and historical but emphasizing spiritual or philosophical dimensions, we would readily realize that he truly was what another great poet of his day, though hailing from an earlier generation, Walt Whitman of America (1819-92), wrote in a celebrated poem: "I am large, I contain multitudes." Indeed, as Tagore has clearly stated, "human mind is deep and variegated; swayed by multiple pulls and pressures it has to bend [and adjust]. That is the sign of its life, its humanity, and its protests against sterile immobility. One who does not face this ambivalence and weakness has a very narrow, hard, and dead mind. Our instinct, which we ridicule often, is the motor of life, it elevates us unto the infinite through pain and pleasure, sanctity and sin." Yet, beneath all his contradictions and ambivalence in respect of a number of issues there is a strong undercurrent of Rabindranath's essential humanism that was nurtured by his native culture he inherited and the Western culture of his day he imbibed. Nothing illustrates this problematic of Tagore's "myriad-minded" genius more clearly and wonderfully than his poems dealing with love.

Admittedly, this paper does not pretend to posit an entirely novel interpretation of Tagore's poems and lyrics dealing with love. On the other hand, the following pages bring together insights of several distinguished studies in Bengali to highlight the profile of Rabindranath, the sensitive, sensuous, shy as well as a spiritual human being. Tagore's delicate and refined sensibilities dictated his poetic imagination and public discourse and his entire life was dedicated to celebrate the beautiful and the eternal and proclaim the triumph of human love sublimated in cosmic compassion and agape or divine love.

In fact, the poet himself confessed to his own fluid understanding of love in a letter to Pramatha Chaudhuri, husband of Tagore's beloved niece Indira: "I can't tell for sure whether I

am driven by [human] love with all its pleasures and pain deriving from union and separation [of lovers] or by an indefinite but inordinate longing for beauty." As early as 1891, Rabindranath had written a poem on *prem* [love]: *"E ye sakhi, hridayer prem—/Sukhduhkhabedanar adianta nahi yar,/Chiradainya, chirapurna hem./ ... bujha yai adho prem, adhkhana mon—/Samasta ke bujhechhe kakhan?"* [This love of mine springs from the heart./It has limitless pangs and pleasures, always empty, always filled with pure gold./...It's easy to figure out a little love or a bit of the heart's desires,/But who could fathom the depth of love in its fullness and entirety?]

Any discussion of Rabindranath's concept of erotic love, that is *prem,* must be prefaced by and predicated on his understanding of human love as well as his outlook on the feminine. Jagadish Bhattacharya has discussed in detail the Hindu cultural influences of the Tagore family (even though Brahmo) and the Western intellectual influences of Renaissance Bengal where Rabindranath was born and brought up. The young poet at once internalized the *parakiya* prem [love without lust or *niskam prem*] of the Vaishnab *sahajiyas* represented by the fourteenth-century poet Chandidas as well as the *eros* of Plato (427-347 B.C.) via the *corpus* of Tagore's predecessor in England the "natural Platonist" Percy B. Shelley (1792-1822), the love of Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) expressed for Beatrice Portinari (1266-90) in *La Vita Nuova,* or that of Francesco Petrarca (1304-74) expressed for Laura de Noves (1308-48) in *Canzoniere.* Rabindranath himself admitted to his attraction for the poet John Keats (1795-1821) in an essay in 1895: "Of all the English poets known to me, I feel an especial intimacy with Keats... [whose] language is marked by a sincere aesthetic delight."

Buddhadeva Bose argues persuasively that Tagore's collection of poems in *Manasi* constitutes the primary *locus* or an "atomic world" *("anubishwa")* of the poet's lyrical *ouevres* and their *leitmotif* is love. Bose argues further that the object of Tagore's love poems in *Manasi* [Woman of Imagination, 1890] is not a concrete identifiable individual but an indefinite fluid entity. At best, as Bose concludes, "most of [Tagore's] poems beginning with *Manasi* down to *Gitanjali* [Song Offerings, 1906-10] are ambivalent or multivalent in that their subject matter love cannot be said to be love in human or divine sense with any certainty."

According to another distinguished Tagore scholar, Kshudiram Das, Rabindranath's literary genius consists, fundamentally, in his assimilation of visible real life *(jiban)* with the idealized or imagined unseen *(arup)* that transcends the sensate world. This synthesis is a reflection of the poet's successful amalgam of the sensuous Western literary tradition and the introspective meditative tradition of his native culture. While Das perhaps comes closer to truth, he tends to overlook the human experiences that inspired some of the poet's outstanding creations in a major way. In the final analysis we must recognize the vast inclusive expanse of his *Weltanschauung* that comprehends a multiplicity of perspectives and trajectories defying any straitjacketed categories.

It must also be noted that Rabindranath's upbringing in a spartan, though never overly puritan, Brahmo family might have conditioned him against any outward expression of emotional outbursts or sexuality. He never experienced any parental indulgence as a child being neither the eldest nor the youngest. His movements inside as well as outside the home were restricted. Admittedly, he was not neglected but, in keeping with the usual practice of his day, as a child he was kept away from the adult world under the control of the household servants, especially the two redoubtable veterans Brajeshwar and Shyam. From his boyhood, Rabindranath learnt to live a simple but disciplined life. "It could be said that luxury was conspicuous by its absence in our childhood," Tagore recalled later. He wrote elsewhere: "I was a lonely child, I had no friends to play with. But I had the great big visible world to keep me company." He had been a sparse eater, though he did take part in physical exercise on a daily basis. He, however, disliked attending school as he must have found the atmosphere there boring and choking. At the same time, he was subjected to a strict regimen of studies and musical lessons at home under private tutors.

His evolution into adulthood occurred under such a controlled environment. The Brahmo etiquette of his family permitted free mixing between male and female members under certain parameters that were neither wholly patriarchal nor entirely egalitarian in terms of genders. Even as a mature young man Tagore manifested his uneasiness in female company. Admiring

his young England-educated nephew Surendranath's spontaneous socialization with young women *(besh ritimata paka styley alap)*, the thirty-two year old poet confessed: "Even at 32 I am unable to converse with women in such an easy, self-assured, and elegant manner. I stumble while walking, fumble while talking, and I am at a loss as to where to place hands or what to do with my long legs; while thus preoccupied with them I fail to continue conversations [with women] satisfactorily. In a crowded room [dimly] lit by three candles it becomes impossible for a clumsy and cowardly creature like me to get myself close to a young woman like iron to a magnet."

No wonder the young Rabindranath failed to summon a typical masculine response to the Maratha belle Anna Tadkhad's unabashed but sincere gesture to get him to hug and kiss her. Many years later, the poet confessed to his timid unromantic indifference to the pretty Anna's (he had nicknamed her "Nalini") overtures. He was similarly unresponsive to the erotic advances of the Scott sisters of Bloomsbury, London where the young poet had been a paying guest. As he told Dilip Ray many years later, he had little doubt that the girls, his "lovers in former life" *(purba janamer priya)*, really fell for him and yet we notice his shy behavior at the initial stage of his meeting with them; he could not even summon the courage to look at one of them, Miss J, straight in the eye, lest he should lose his cool beholding her "well-chiseled countenance" *[apurba chhanche dhala mukh].* The poet's experiences with the mature, independent-minded, and intellectual Victoria Ocampo (1891-1979) of Argentina, whom he named Bijaya (a Bengali synonym for Victoria), register a similar episode of unrequited passion. One might reasonably suppose that his intimacy with Kadambari (1858-84), wife of his elder brother Jyotirindranath (1849-1925), was immaculate—it being a romantic communion or (as will be discussed later, *bhalobasa*) because of a tabooed relationship.

Kadambari had possessed the poet's heart by gifting away hers to him. In fact Tagore dedicated a number of poems to her: *Bhagnahriday* (Heartbreak,1881), *Chhabi O Gaan* (Images and Lyrics,1884), *Prakritir Pratishodh* (Nature's Revenge,1884), *Shaishab Sangeet* (Song of Childhood,1884), *Bhanusingha Thakurer Padabali*

(Lyrics by Bhanusingha Thakur,1884), and the like. Victoria Ocampo, on the other hand, fell in love hook, line and sinker with a handsome sexagenarian fit to be her father in age, and she did not hide her feelings for her *gurudeb.* "I love you. Nothing can alter that," she confessed candidly in one of her missives to the master and concluded reiterating her feelings for him: "let me tell you, Gurudev, that I love you". The old bard in turn dedicated his anthology *Purabi* (1925) to his Argentine adorer Bijaya.

As he recalled his enchanted encounter: *Bidesher bhalobasa diye/Ye preyasi petechhe asan/Chiradin rakhibe bandhiya/Kane kane tahari bhasan./Bhasa yar jana chhila nako,/Ankhi yar kayechhila katha,/ Jagaye rakhibe chiradin/Sakarun tahari barata* [The lover who has gifted a throne/ with her love from a strange land,/Her whisperings will ring in (my) ears/For all time to come./Her language I did not know/Only her eyes spoke to me./Her melancholy message will endure for all time to come]. Ketaki Kushari Dyson, who has admirably probed into Ocampo's relationship with the aging Rabindranath in 1924-25, maintains that she became a Muse for the poet's creative corpus after 1924.

Dyson's claims for Ocampo's impact on Rabindranath's literary output since the mid 1920s conflict with Bhattacharya's observations on the influence of the precocious child Ranu Adhikari (later Lady Ranu Mukherjee), whose beauty, simplicity, and gloriously freewheeling love and admiration for the handsome old man inspired his creative genius in significant ways. The child Ranu appeared as the messenger of the poet's *Jibandebata* reminding him of the playmate of his early youth Kadambari—"morning star of his life transformed into the evening star [of his old age]" *(bhorer tara elo sanhjher tarar beshe).* Even Tagore's younger relatives wondered about the "new inspiration" and "cause" of the "outpouring of new poems of a fine and noble vintage."

There were other women in the poet's life—less glamorous intellectually—who impacted his psyche and work, women such as his child-bride Mrinalini (though more a spouse than a Muse), his niece Indira, his sister-in-law Jnadanandini, his daughter-in-law Pratima, his granddaughter Nandita, and Rani Mahalanabis, and Rani Chanda. When we examine the various stages in Tagore's understanding and appreciation of woman's humanity, we cannot

fail to notice that while as an adolescent, he saw her as a fairy queen of his dream world; as a young man he saw her as a romantic princess. Naturally, women awakened his unbridled youthful passion; witness his output during 1878-84. For instance, his *Kabikahini* [A Poet's Lore] and *Banaphool* [Wild Flowers], the two novellas in verse, published in 1878 and 1880 respectively, with their theme of an intimate relationship between femininity and the natural world, express the poet's spontaneous lyrical genius but contain a mishmash of wishy-washy sentimental excesses.

Recalling *Bhagnahriday,* Tagore himself observed later that at the time of composing this piece his mind was filled with vaporous bubble and his sentimental gunk was being churned in the whirlpool of fantasies without any purpose. This was sterile stirring—devoid of creativity and beauty. His lack of direction and aimless amorous fantasy yielded to intensely passionate longings especially in pieces such as *Asahay Bhalobasa* (Unbearable Passion), *Ami Hara* (Loss of 'I'), *Upahar* (Gift), and *Durdin* (Hard Times), all belonging to the collection titled *Sandhya Sangeet* [Evening Song, 1882].

The young poet's heart was shivering in trepidation having been overcome by an uncontrollable longing for the bliss of a mysterious woman's touch: *"Man mor pagaler hena/Pranpane shudhay se yena,/Praner majhe ki karile tomare go pai,/Ye thnai rayechhe shunya ki karile se shunya purai"* (My ecstatic heart seeks you in daring desperation,/Asking how could I get near you, how [could I] fill the void [in my heart] that you created). As he confided to Pramatha Chaudhuri: "I passed the whole day [during the period of the composition of *Chhabi O Gaan* [Pictures and Songs] like a lunatic—I was overwhelmed by the gushing flood tide of my newly awakened youth."

By the time Rabindranath composed the poems of *Chhabi O Gaan,* he had crossed the boundary of dreamy and idealized romantic longings of adolescence and entered the tumultuous world of youth assailed by an intense feeling of adult erotic urge. Unlike the earlier mood of his adolescence, when he sought the abstract and idealized woman of his fancy, the fully grown young man now set out to construct the image of a realistic female. As

he recalled the period of the composition of *Chhabi O Gan* in his old age, his "desire [for a woman's love] was not to be satisfied with mere music, he now wished to savor her physical beauty."

This state of mind is made lyrically manifest in the piece that cries out loud: *Hridaye jagaye basanar shikha/Nayane sajaye maya marichika/Shudhu ghure mari marubhume/Tabu kena, tabu kena michhe e pipasa./Biswa-charachara lupta haye yay/E ki ghor prem andharahu pray/Jibana-youbana grase/Tabe kena, tabe kena michhe e kuyasa.* [I move about aimlessly with my heart burning in desire/And my eyes beholding an illusive mirage./ What, then, my love is for?/ This tremendous passion, like the blinding *Rahu,* consumes my youth and my life./Why, then, is this love of mine?] (*Mayar Khela* [Play of Maya], 1888). Such anxious longings and ecstatic excitement mark his poems, *inter alia,* "Nirjharer Swapnabhanga" [The Awakening of the Waterfall], and "Ananta Jiban" [Eternal Life], all belonging to the anthology titled *Prabhat Sangeet* (1883).

It is well known how Rabindranath came to write his profoundly moving long poem "Nirjharer Swapnabhanga" in a fit of sudden illumination that had all the qualities of an epiphany. Sometime in 1881-82 Rabindranath lodged with his brother Jyotirindranath and Kadambari at 10 Sudder Street, Kolkata, just behind the National Museum. Here, as he later recalled in *Jibansmriti* (My Reminiscences): "One morning I happened to be standing on the verandah looking that way. The sun was just rising through the leafy tops of the trees. As I gazed, all of a sudden a lid seemed to fall from my eyes, and I found the world bathed in a wonderful radiance, with waves of beauty and joy swelling on every side..... That very day the poem 'Nirjharer Swapnabhanga' (The Awakening of the Waterfall), gushed forth and coursed on like a cascade."

Interestingly enough, Rabindranath's ecstatic exclamation *"jagiya uthechhe pran/ore uthali uthechhe bari/ore praner basana praner abeg rudhia rakhite nari"* [My aroused heart is overflowing with uncontrollable passion] was as sensual as it was spiritual, reminiscent of child Ramakrishna's *samadhi* at the sight of flying cranes in the cloudy sky or the sixteenth-century German reformer Martin Luther's wondrous vision of the merciful Christ upon reading St. Paul's letter to the Romans. The poem contains Tagore's paradigm of love and, as many critics agree, heralds the birth of Rabindranath, the future world poet. It is fairly certain that the inspiration behind this literary masterpiece was the poet's sister-in-law and that there developed an intimacy between the two young sensitive and impressionable individuals of almost the same age.

It is noteworthy that the poet's later creations, *Kadi O Komal* (Sharps and Flats, 1886) and *Manasi,* in particular, brought in, to paraphrase his own observations, the fresh fruits of the heady autumn *(sharatkal)* in place of his former sentimental torrents of the rainy season *(barsakal).* However, the autumnal fruits also generated an ambivalent image of the female—at once passionate mistress and compassionate mother. Thus in his essay *Dui Bon* [Two Sisters], Tagore wrote that women are of two kinds: erotic *(priya)* and motherly *(ma).* To cite a few lines from the poem "Hriday Asan" (Heart's Throne) in *Kadi O Komal: Komal dukhani bahu sharame lataye/Bikashita stan duti aguliya ray,/Tari majhkhane ki re rayechhe lukaye/Atishay-sayatan-gopan hriday!/Sei niralay sei komal asane/Duikhani snehasphuta staner chhayay/Kishor premer mridu pradoskirane/Anata ankhir tale rakhibe amay* [(Her) two tender arms cling shyly to cover and protect the two blossoming breasts./In between them lies hidden [her] carefully nurtured heart!/In that secret tender seat under the shade of the two loving breasts and her sunken eyes [she] will keep me ensconced at the faint twilight of youthful love]. In *Purna Milan* [Total Union], the poet's eroticism is acutely clear: *Trisita paran aji kandichhe katare/Tomare sarbanga diye karite darshan/Abar kothao—/Oi dehakhani buke tule neba bala/ Panchadash batsarer ek gachhi mala* [My thirsty heart is crying out/ To behold you with my every limb./Girl, I shall place your body in my heart like a garland of fifteen.] Other pieces such as "Stan" (Breast), "Chumban" (Kiss), "Bibasana" (Undressed), "Bahu" (Arms), "Charan" (Feet), "Deher Milan" (Physical Union) etc. from *Kadi O Komal* celebrated the charms of the female physique.

In his maturer years Tagore came to view his relationship with women as something deeper and dearer than that of a partner in the game of love. In one of the poems of his *Sonar Tari,* the poet's *kabita kalpanalata* (Muse) or *manassundari* (the beautiful woman of imagination) becomes *jibaner adhisthatri debi* (presiding goddess of

life) and *antaralakshmi* (goddess of the innermost recesses of heart). She also becomes what the poet calls *jibandebata* (lord of life). As he wrote in *Chitra* (1896): *Rate preyasir rup dhari/Tumi esechha praneswari,/Prate kakhan debir beshe/Tumi samukhe udile hese/Ami sambhrambhare rayechhi dandaye dure abanata shire/Aji nirmalbay shanta ushay nirjan naditire* [You came to me at night in the/Guise of a lover./At dawn you appeared smiling,/Decked as a Goddess./ And awestruck, I remain standing on the desolate riverbank yonder/With my head hung low in wonder] ("Rate O Prabhate" [At Night and at Dawn]).

For Tagore, thus, woman is *se yena tufan/yahare chanchal kare se tarike kare khan khan* (she is like a torrent./She pulverizes the boat she shakes); she is a *yadukari bachane chalane* (a charmer in her gait and speech), who is *prasadhan sadhane chatura* (an adept at making herself up), and yet the same woman lights and puts out a small lamp in her room./ After her morning bath she unlocks her hair and meditates her silent prayer *(grihakone chhoto deep jvalay nebay/ Snan sanga kari elochule prabhate nirab nibedane stab kare ekmane)* ("Ujjiban," *Mahua*).

This melange of opposite attitudes bears testimony to the poet's unstated albeit undoubted thesis that true human love is more than lust, it is also the channel of receiving the assurance of divine grace. The capstone for such a realization is to be noticed in *Mahua* (1928) which contains, among others, the following piece: "Woman is God's greatest gift descended on earth to bestow dignity and honor upon man" *[Nari se ye mahendrer dan,/esechhe dharitritale purusere sampite sanman,* "Spardha" (Audacity)]. In another piece the poet wrote: *Dibe se khuli/E ghor dhulir/Abaran./ Tahar hate/ankhir pate/jagat-jaga jagaran./Se hasikhani anibe tani/sabar hasi/Gadibe geha, jagabe sneha/jibanrashi* [She will unveil/this dusty cloak./This world will awaken to her look./Her smile will make everyone smile,/ And nurture a home and evoke affection in every life] ("Shunya Hridayer Akankhya"[Desires of an Empty Heart]). Thus, as the poet proclaims in *Malini,* woman is neither a goddess nor an abstraction but a familiar female of flesh and blood—*debi na re, daya na re, gharer se meye.*

We also need to note that Rabindranath's idealized woman is no mere abstraction even though she is a product of his creative

genius. Thus his *manasi* is a mix of sensuous experience as well as poetic imagination. As has been noted above, he did acknowledge *la femme* to be god's gift, and yet he could write: *Shudhu bidhatar sristi naha tumi nari./Purus gadechhe tore soundarya sanchari/Apan antar hate* [Woman, you're not created by god alone./ You're also made of the beauty of man's heart]. In his famous lyric from *Manaspratima* [Idol of Imagination] he sang: *Tumi amara sadhera sadhana/Ami apana manera madhuri mishaye tomare karechhi rachana* [You're the prayers of my desire/ I've created you from my imagination of the sweet and the beautiful]. Thus the poet could announce to his *manasi* with confidence as well as humility: *Aj tumi apanake chinechha/Amar chena diye* [You now know who you are/By my reckoning].

In a number of subsequent poems, Rabindranath celebrated the beauty and beatitude of femininity in nature. His idea of *prem* has now been transmuted or sublimated into *bhalobasa* that is as much spiritual and cerebral *(manomai)* as it is passionate and physical. The poet even resurrects the Hindu cupid Madan, who suffered death by being immolated in Shiva's angry fire, as the deity of love reborn as a hero *(mrityu hate otho Pushpadhanu/Hey Atanu, birer tanute laha tanu).*

Here we must recall Rabindranath's definition of *bhalobasa.* As early as 1881, the young poet had written in an essay in *Bharati* that "*bhalobasa* is more than mere self-surrender. Rather, it is surrendering the very best of one's self. *Bhalobasa* is not just installing the idol of the goddess in the heart. It is, more appropriately, installing the idol in the heart's sanctum." In his "Pashchim Yatrir Diary" (Diary of a Traveler to the West) written on board the vessel "Haruna Maru *en route* to South America in October 1924, Tagore expatiated on the meaning of *prem* in the double import of the word: *bhalolaga* (liking) and *bhalobasa* (love). The former is directed toward the self while the latter toward the other. *Bhalolaga* is gratified in enjoyment, *bhalobasa* achieves fulfillment in sacrifice and surrender. "*Bhalobasa* realizes itself in the spirit, it is the expansion of human personality," Tagore concluded.

In "Upahar" [Gift] Tagore wrote: *Bhule gechhi kabe tumi chhelebela ekdin/Maramer kachhe esechhile/Snehamay chhayamay*

sandhyasama ankhi meli/Ekbar bujhi hesechhile/Age ke janita balo kata ki lukano chhila/Hriday nibhrite/tomar nayan diya amar nijer hiya/ Painu dekhite [I have forgotten when in my youth you came to my heart/And looked at me with your loving eyes cool as the evening shadows./Who could have known what treasure was hidden in my heart until I could discover it through your gaze] *(Sandhyasangit).* The poet's lover is not just an erotic playmate of youth; she is also his soulmate in life and beyond. His idea of femininity shows a remarkable fusion of Western and Eastern ideas in his reconstruction of the character of Chitrangada in the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*. As he makes her proclaim in the famous lyrical play *Chitrangada: Ami Chitrangada ami rajendranandini/Debi nahi, nahi samanya ramani./Puja kari rakhibe mathay, seo ami/Nai; abahela kari pusiya rakhibe/Pichhe, seo ami nahi. Yadi parshve rakho/ More sankater pathe, duruha chintar/Yadi angsha dao, yadi anumati karo/Kathin brater taba sahay haite,/Yadi sukhe duhkhe more karo sahachari,/Amar paibe tabe parichay.* [I am princess Chitrangada,/ Not a goddess to be worshiped/On an altar,/Nor a mere woman pushed behind/With indifference./If you let me walk beside you/ In weal and woe/And make me your comrade/In difficult venture,/You will know me/For what I am.] "In her," observes Rajat Ray, "the older Indian idea of wife as a partner in the duties of family life *(sahadharmini)* had developed, under Western influence, into the romantic concept of a comrade in perilous action." Clinton Seely further clarifies the term *bhalobasa* by comparing it to the commonly understood terms such as sneha (a kind of filial attraction) and *prem* (amorous romantic love). *Bhalobasa,* Seely concludes, "comprehends both *sneha* and *prem.*"

Niharranjan Ray astutely observes that for Tagore "love cannot deny or bypass the reality of the body's desire; but a love which never learns to go beyond the body knows no real fulfillment, no peace, and is, therefore, unreal." Indeed, as the poet himself has written in *Creative Unity*, "in human nature sexual passion is fiercely individual and destructive, but dominated by the ideal of love, it has been made to flower into a perfection of beauty, becoming in its best expression symbolical of the spiritual truth in man which is his kinship of love with the Infinite." In his poem "Nisphal Kamana" [Unrequited Passion] he had admonished: *Bhalobaso, preme hao bali,/Cheona tahare./Akankhar dhan nahe atma*

manaber/ [Love (her), and be strong in love,/but do not desire her./Human soul is not an object of lust.]

Rabindranath has often been seen as a mystic for whom, in Vaishnavic terms, *atmendriya pritiichha* [self-centered love and desire] or *eros* [*kam*] coalesced in love for God [*prem*], krishnendriya pritiichha [Krishna—or God-centered love and desire]. In other words, the poet's idea of love is tantalizingly comparable to the Christian idea of *agape.* However, I argue that Rabindranath's idea of love cannot be apprehended by regarding him a mystic or regarding his idea of *prem* or *eros* as divine *agape.* Abbé Henri Bremond distinguishes between mystical, that is, religious and poetical activity and considers the latter as an imperfect form of the former. Even if poetry is considered as a kind of prayer in that it employs "some of the resources of the deep-seated soul," it is, according to Bremond, an imitation of mystical prayer, an *ersatz* religious solution to soteriological problems.

Then, *agape* is radically different from *eros. Agape* is a noble spiritual love that mimics the love of God for all His creations. In *agape,* all things are loved unconditionally with no consideration of a transactional *quid pro quo.* It is unmotivated or as the Bengali expression has it *ahaituki prem. Eros,* on the other hand, is motivated by the acquisition of happiness. Eros recognizes value in the object of love and loves it. *Agape* loves and creates value in its object of love. As the psychologist Erich Fromm has it, eros is based on the proposition "I love you because I need you" while *agape* is predicated on the plea "I need you because I love you." *Eros* is man's way to God, *agape* is God's way to man.

Jagadish Bhattacharya posits, following the definition of the seventeenth-century Bengali aesthetician Kabikarnapura, that Rabindranath's idea of love could be something analogous to suprasensuous eros or *pritirati,* that is a feeling or sentiment which delights *(rati)* the heart but remains *asamproyagabisaya* or devoid of carnality. Rabindranath's idea of *pritirati,* is poignantly expressed in his poem *Banaspati* (The *Dendron*) in which, standing in the sunset hours of life, the tired titan expressed his desire for a final repose and quiet after having struggled with the *Sturm und Drang* of his soul buffeted by the crosscurrents of his unrequited passion and unfulfilled mission in life. In his response of December 28,

1924 to the overture of his Argentine hostess, who had written him to say "I have gone through such joy and such sufferings all these days! Joy because I felt near you; sufferings, because you ignored my nearness," the aging and ailing Rabindranath wrote to that "incomparable one" *[tulanahinare]* he had met "on the verdant bank of the blue ocean" *[sunil sagarer shyamal kinare]: Daya karo, daya karo, aranyak ei tapaswire,/ Dhairya dharo, ogo digangana,/ Byartha karibare tay ashanta abege phire phire/baner angane matiyo na./ E ki tibra prem, e ye shilabristi nirmam duhsaha—/Duranta chumban-bege taba/Chhindite jharate chao andha sukhe, kaha more kaha,/kishor korak naba naba?/Asuk tomar prem diptirupe nilambartale,/Shaktirupe eso, digangana./Uthuk spandita hoye sakhe sakhe pallabe balkale/ Sughambhir tomar bandana./Dao tare sei tej mahatwe yahar samadhan,/ Sarthak hok se banaspati./Biswer anjali yena bhariya karite pare dan/ Tapsyar purna parinati.* [Hold back, please, O Goddess of Directions, do not distract this mendicant of the forest with your restless desire./ The hailstorm of your intense passion is merciless and unbearable./ Tell me, do you intend to pluck the new born buds with your violent kisses?/ Let your love descend as the light from the blue sky/ And you, Goddess, come as the primal energy, *Shakti.*/Let the leaves and the bark of this *dendron* pulsate in singing your paean./ Endow it with your power so that it may achieve the final consummation of its prayers by offering all it has to the world at large].

Especially Tagore's last three collections of poems—*Rogshayyay* (In Sickbed), *Arogya,* (Recovery), and *Janmadine* (On My Birthday) written during October 1940-March 1941—reveal an enigmatic convergence of the artist and the ascetic. All the pieces of these collections are characterized by a quiet grandeur: *shanta rasa.* Though, according to Bagbhatta, this particular rasa or aesthetic delight has its marker in *samyakjnan,* that is, awareness of the Absolute Soul *(Paramatman)* or God, in Tagore *shanta rasa* displays the unity of the two divergent consciousness: "the sweet earthy passion" *(martyer madhuratama asakti)* and "the sublime freedom of the heavens" *(akasher nirmalatama mukti).* This consciousness informs his idea of love or *bhalobasa* as it evolved from the impetuous, rebellious, and "delirious cascading waterfall" *(nirjharer pralapkallol)* of his youth to a serene and silent prayer "in cosmic

quiescence" *(nikhiler brihat shantite).* In the sunset hours of his life, in a relatively obscure but a truly lyrical piece titled "Sandhyay" [In the Evening], the poet beseeches his beloved to be as beautiful, serene, and quiet as the evening and asks her to come to his life all by herself: *Ogo tumi sandhyar mata hao...omni sundar shanta...mata dhire dhire amar jibantire/Barek dandao ekakini.*

Rabindranath was a humanist *par excellence* who loved this beautiful earth and its colorful inhabitants so much that he refused to depart from this world: "I do not want to die in this beautiful world,/ But live in the hearts of men" *[Marite chahina ami, sundar bhubane, /manaber majhe ami banchibare chai] (Kadi O Komal).* He candidly confessed to his commitments to the world at large in his letter to his Argentine hostess and admirer Victoria Ocampo: "My true home is there where from my surroundings comes the call to me to bring out the best that I have, for that inevitably leads me to the touch with the universal." He wrote in his Reminiscences: "I guess my work has only one theme—reconciling the finite with the infinite."

Tagore's quintessential humanism is implicit in his concepts of *dharma* and *debata.* For him *dharma,* loosely translated as religion, is *Manuser Dharma* (Religion of Man, 1931) and *debata* (God) is *Jibandebata* (Lord of Life). As he explained: "That creative energy inside me which is unifying as well as signifying all the pleasures and pain of my life, and my changing self through many rebirths I had called Lord of Life *(Jibandebata).*" The *Jibandebata* is also, as Tagore himself has said borrowing the *Baul* (rustic roving singing minstrels) imagery, "the man or woman of the heart" or *maner manus.* A noteworthy feature of Tagore's God is that He presides over His created world. Tagore has little patience with Shankaracharya's *mayavad* that reduces this world to a mere illusion or a dream.

To him, this world, created by God, is intensely real. "Without the world," he declares, "God would be phantasm, without God the world would be chaos." Tagore's conviction that "to know the Supreme Joy through all earthly love, to perceive the visible form of the Exquisite One through the world of beauty is what I call the realisation of freedom" is a telling testament of his pronounced earth-credo or terraphilia.

As early as 1901 Rabindranath wrote: *Bairagya sadhane mukti, se amar nai/Asankhya bandhan-majhe mahanandamai/Labhiba muktir swad* [Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. /I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight]. About three decades later, he reiterated: *Shudhayo na more tumi mukti kotha, mukti kare kai,/Ami sadhak nai, ami guru nai/Ami kabi, achhi/Dharanir ati kachhakachhi/Eparer kheyar ghatay* [Ask me not what salvation means or where to get it./Sage or mentor I'm not./I am but a poet who stays close to this earth on this side of the bank (of life)]. In another poem, he confessed: "How I wish to quench my thirst by drinking time and again the wine of bliss from all the vessels of this world" *[Ichha kare barbar mitaite sadh/Pan kari biswer sakal patra hate/ Anandamadiradhara naba naba srote].* Sometime later, the poet announced: *Labhiachhi jibaloke manbjanmer adhikar,/Dhanya ei soubhagya amar* [I'm blessed to be born a human in this world living beings] ("Barsashes" [Year End], 1926). In a short poem composed toward the end of his life the poet proclaimed in no uncertain terms: *Shes sparsa niye yaba yabe dharanir bale yabo, 'Tomar dhulir tilak parechhi bhale; dekhechhi nityer jyoti duryoger mayar adale./ Satyer anandarup e dhulite niyechhe murati/Ei jene e dhulay rakhinu pranati* [When I go having touched this earth for the last time, I would say, 'Today I have marked my forehead with your dust;/ I have seen the bright eternity behind the mist of danger and turmoil./I know that the beautiful truth has realized itself and I place my head on the dust (of this world)'].

He had sung: *Amar mukti alloy alloy ei akashe/Amar mukti dhulay dhulay ghase ghase/Amar mukti sarbajaner maner majheDuhkha-bipad tuchha kara kathin kaje* [My deliverance is in the lighted firmament, in every dust particle and in every grass of the earth/... My salvation is in the universal mind and in my exertions defying all dangers and disappointments]. The ailing *Bisvakabi* [World Poet] tendered his final offering not to a deity of the distant heavens but to humanity of this world: *Ami bratya, ami mantrahin./Sakal mandirer bahire amar puja aj samapta hala/Deblok theke/Manabloke,/ Akashe jyotirmay puruse/Ar maner manuse amar antartama anande* [I am the uninitiated pariah,/Today I have performed my final worship with profound bliss of the bright God of the skies/And the Man of My Heart on this world away from the temples] (*Patraput* [The Leaves], 1936).

Yet Tagore was far from a naïve starry-eyed philanthropist or a supramundane mystic or prophet. Even though he delighted in his interaction with peoples and ideas, he was also painfully aware of the deceit, deviousness, and iniquity of his world. Some of his contemporaries considered him as a poet of ethereal, even unreal *[bastutantrahin]* fantasies. A one-time friend of the poet, Narendranath Datta (premonastic name of Swami Vivekananda, 1863-1902), who had taken lessons in Brahmo prayer songs from Rabindranath, called him a purveyor of "erotic venom." An influential poet and literary critic in Britian ridiculed Tagore's English translation of his own poems as the product of an illiterate Indian. On October 25, 1930 he wrote to Indira: "By god's grace I was born with a tough physique so that I could take as much abuse as I can from my own country[men]." On September 14, 1933 Rabindranath wrote: "It is a matter of great regret that for [some people] scandal mongering makes a good living. I thus realize how widespread and deep is the animus against me in my country. How little pain my country people feel by hurting and insulting me! Had this not been the case, scurrilous criticisms against me would not have been so profitable." Tagore's biographer Mukhopadhyay laments: "At what an inauspicious moment did he compose *Sonar Tari!* No other single creation of Rabindranath spewed so much flattery as well as vitriol either earlier or later....Really speaking, the poet was actually the target of attack, his poetry an excuse, because some people sought to belittle those qualities of Rabindranath's multifaceted genius that had been recognized by the majority of the intellectuals of the country."

Although Tagore frankly confessed to being a romantic he did reckon with his personal struggle against the terrifying real world on his own terms. He would deal with it by bringing together the *bhairab* [terrifying reality] and the *sundar* [the ideal and the beautiful]. He wrote: *Yetha oi bastab jagat/Sekhane anagonar path/ Achhe amar chena./Sethakar dena/Shodh kari—se nahe kathai taha jani/ tahar ahban ami mani./Shoukhin bastab setha nahi hai./Sethay sundar yena bhairaber sathe/Chale hate hate* [I'm familiar with the road to the real world./I know, too, that I can't pay my debts to it in words/But I respond to its call./...No fancy reality could be found there./There the terrific and the terrible walk hand in hand./] His

Sheslekha, composed in the last year of his life contain a couple of poems that reveal his personal struggle: *Rupnaraner kule/Jege uthilam,/Janilam e jagat svapna nai./Rakter akashe dekhilam/Apanar rup,/Chinilam apanare aghate aghate/bedanay bedanay;/Satya ye kathin,/ Kathinere bhalobasilam,/Se kakhano kare na banchana./Amrityur duhkher tapasya e jiban,/Satyer darun mulya labh karibare,/Mirtyute sakal dena shodh kare dite* [I awoke on the bank of the Rupnaran/And realized that this world is not a phantasm./I beheld my visage etched in blood,/And recognized myself amidst many hurts and aches;/I fell in love with the relentless reality that knows no deception./

This life of mine is a long painful prayer till I redeem all my debts and receive the terrible price of truth in death]. The very last piece, dictated from deathbed is eloquent, elegant, and evocative: *Tomar sristir path rekhechha akirna kari/Bichitra chhalanajale/ He chhalanamayi./Mithya bisvasher phand petechha nipun hate/Saral jibane./Ei prabanchanadiye mahatvere karechha chinhita./...Satyere se pai/Apan aloke—dhouta antare antare./Kichhute parena tare prabanchite,/ Shes puraskar niye yai se ye/Apan bhandare./Anayase ye perechhe chhalana sahite/Se pay tomar hate/Shantir akshay adhikar* [Sorceress, you've strewn the path of/Your creation in a mesh of varied wiles./Cleverly you've laid a snare of false beliefs/In artless lives./ You've marked the (honest) and great with deceptions/....Though crooked outside/He's upright within,/And that is his pride./ Though all call him disturbed,/He finds truth in the inner recesses of his heart/Washed clean by his inner light./Nothing can fool him;/He carries to his treasure-house/His final reward./He who could put up with your deceit receives from you the right/To everlasting peace].

Tagore's humanism in its cosmic expanse makes him an aesthete whose experience of beauty and the creative art expressed in it go against the grain of ancient Indian or Vedantic aesthetics which, to quote a sentence from a modern exponent of the subject, "makes us progressively conscious of the illusoriness of the empirical world and ego-life and of the reality of the higher and non-attached spirit within us." However, Tagore did not think that the function of art was to make us realize "the illusoriness of the empirical world" and the hyper-reality of a higher world. By detachment and disinterestedness of aesthetic experience he

understood detachment from the exigencies of action and never from the world of humanity and of nature where his every step on the green meadow or in the grove has filled his life with enchanting and exciting delight *(Ghase ghase pa phelechhi baner pathe jete/phuler gandhe bharechhe man uthechhe pran mete).* As he wrote, "from the dawn of history the poets and artists have been infusing the colours and music of their own soul into the structure of existence.

And from this I have known certainly that the earth and the sky are woven with the fibres of man's mind." He has thus found his niche under the starry firmament and his song springs forth in utter amazement *(Akash-bhara surya-tara,/Bishwa-bhara pran/ Tahari majhkhane ami peyechhi, peyechhi mor sthan./Bismaye jage, jage amar pran).* One of the most poignant pieces proclaiming the poet's aesthetic amalgam of human and cosmic love may be found in the collection titled *Chaitali* [Late Harvest] (1896): *Amader dujaner pratham chumban./Ananta nakshatralok uthila shihari/ Amader chakshe ela ashrujal bhari* (Our first kiss./The limitless galaxy shuddered./ Tears filled our eyes). This is what Theodor Lipps had called *Einfühlung* or empathy. This empathy is love in all its forms: love between a man and a woman *(eros),* man's love for God and God's for man *(agape),* and aesthetic love *(Einfühlung),* that is, love for the world at large through empathy, which means "feeling into" rather than sympathy, which means "feeling with."

We should bear in mind that the poet had expressed such sentiments eloquently earlier in his poem "Ananta Prem" [Love Eternal]: *Nikhiler shukh nikhiler dukh/Nikhil praner priti/Ekti premer majhare mishechhe/ sakal premer smriti/Sakal kaler sakal premer giti* [The bliss, blight, and love of the world has merged into one love that holds the memory and music of universal love for all times]. Elsewhere he endorsed the sentiment of a woman poet of medieval India and cited her in his own translation: I salute the Life in the house and the Life abroad in the unknown,/The Life full of joy and the Life weary with its pains,/The Life eternally moving, rocking the world into stillness,/The Life deep and silent, breaking out into roaring waves. Nirad Chaudhuri observes that mystical faith in "Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy of life is at once rooted in the faith in earthly existence and in life beyond death." In other

words, following Abu Sayeed Ayyub, it may be concluded that for Rabindranath love of woman, nature, and god is a connected concept.

The lover Rabindranath cannot be separated from the aesthetic priest, the worshiper of his *Jibandebata.* As he had declared in a lecture in the United States in 1917: "With the growth of man's spiritual life, our worship has become worship of love." This worship is also accompanied with a gender transformation of the object of love. Thus the poet's ususal lover, the woman, now becomes a male with a masculine name *Jibandebata, antaratama* (the most intimate one) to whom the male poet now expresses his love as a woman (in Edward Thompson's unkind words expressing a "zenana imagery"): *Ohe anaratama,/mitechhe ki taba sakal tiyas/Asi antare mama?/Duhkhasukher laksa dharay/Patra bharia diyachhi tomay,/ Nithur pidane ningadi baksa/Dalita draksa sama./* [My lord, have you drunk enough of me? /I have crushed my breast like vineyards,/ filling your cup with my joys and sorrows/].

This reversal of gender whereby the poet himself becomes a woman supplicating to a male lover must have been facilitated by his Vaishnabic cultural heritage. Interestingly enough, Rabindranath's poetic career began as the precocious Bhanusingha composing erotic lyrics on the Vaishnavic theme of the love between Radha and Krishna. In his advancing years, especially past his middle age, the poet harked back to the same font of his poetic consciousness, the Vaishnava devotional style of feminization of the male devotee. Thus the poems addressed to his *Jibandebata* are more philosophical versions of his romantic lyrics of adolescence and early youth transforming his erotic consciousness into *prem* (in the true sense of *bhalobasa*): *Sab cheye satya mor, sei mrityunjay,/se amar prem./Tare ami rakhiya elem/ Aparibartan arghya tomar uddeshe* [My love is immortal and it's the highest truth (of my life)./That eternal offering of mine I have dedicated to you]. The unabashed romantic matured into a brooding philosopher who combined in himself the *premik* (lover) and the *pujari* (worshiper). This erotic ascetic, the dendron of the forest *(aranyak banaspati)*, awaited till his dying day, staking all his possessions, the advent of his surreal lover, *Jibandebata,* the darling deity of life, who is also *kautukmayi antaryami* (playful indwelling

woman), *antartama jibannath* (lord of life who is inside the innermost), or *priyatama pranesh* (the most beloved lord of life): For the return of the One/ Who has left me on the road,/ I eagerly wait with all my load. / He is never seen but he can see,/ Yet thus unseen he loves me. /My heart is lost in my secret affair/ With that amazing intimate Lover *(Amar sakal niye base achhi/ Sarbanasher ashay /Ami tar lagi path cheye achhi/ Pathe ye jan bhasay/ Ye jan dey na dekha yay ye dekhe/ Bhalobase adal theke/Amar man majechhe sei gabhirer/ Gopan bhalobasay).*

Rabindranath Tagore was no world-weary self-abnegating ascetic. He was a seeker of the ultimate freedom and beauty in this life on this planet, and not a beyonder. "Not self-immolation, but self-expression must be our aim," the poet proclaimed—and this should serve as his enduring epitaph.

THE PARROT'S TALE

Once there was a bird. It was an utterly foolish bird. It sang songs, but did not read the scriptures. It flew, it jumped, but did not have the faintest sense of etiquette.

The King said, "Such birds! They are of no use at all. They only eat the fruits in the orchards and the royal fruit-market runs a deficit."

He called the minister, and commanded, "Educate it."

The King's nephew was given the responsibility of educating the bird.

The scholars held long discussions, the subject being — "What is the reason behind the foolishness of this creature?"

The conclusion was: much learning could not be stored in the tiny nest that the bird could make with just chips and twigs. So, first of all, it was necessary to build a good cage for it.

The scholars got amply rewarded and went home merrily.

The goldsmith started building the cage. The cage turned out to be so exquisite that everyone under the sun rushed to see it. Some said, "Education indeed!" Others said, "Education or no education, at least the bird has got the cage! What a lucky bird!"

The goldsmith got a bagful of rewards. He set out for home cheerfully. The pundit came to teach the bird. He took a pinch of snuff and said, "A few books won't do."

The nephew summoned the scribes. They copied from the books and copied from those copies and made an enormous mound of such things. Whoever saw it, said, "Bravo! Learning is going to overflow!"

The scribes got cartfuls of rewards. At once they rushed home. None of their descendants faced any poverty ever since.

The nephew was always busy, doing endless number of things regarding the surveillance of the precious cage. Repairs were quite frequent. Apart from that, there was the washing and the cleaning and the polishing of the cage. Everyone admitted, "Sure signs of improvement."

Many people were employed and to supervise them, many more people were employed. Each of them got a handful of coins every month and filled their chests with them.

They, their brothers, sisters and cousins began to live in great luxury and happiness.

The world lacks many things; only fault-finders are there in plenty. They said, "There are improvements of the cage all right, but nobody cares for the bird."

The words reached the King's ears. He called the nephew and said, "What's this I hear, dear nephew?"

The nephew said, "Your Majesty! If you want to know the truth then call the goldsmith, send for the pundits and the scribes, summon the repairmen and their supervisors. The fault-finders cannot make both ends meet and talk nonsense."

The situation became crystal-clear to the King, and a gold necklace adorned the nephew's neck.

The King wished to see for himself the lightening speed at which education was proceeding. So one day he came to the education center with his entire entourage of friends, companions and courtiers.

As soon as he reached the entrance, there arose a chorus of bells and drums and harps and flutes and lyres and lutes and

cellos and violins and cymbals and mandolins and trombones and bassoons and harpsichords and clavichords. The pundits swung their pig-tails and started chanting hymns at the top of their voices. The repairmen and the laborers and the goldsmith and the scribes and the supervisors and the cousins greeted the King with a huge uproar.

The Nephew said, "Your Majesty! What do you think?"

The King said, "Amazing! This is a non-trivial amount of sound!"

The Nephew said, "It's not just the sound Your Majesty, there is also a non-trivial amount of money behind it."

The King was extremely pleased. He started back. He came out of the front door and was about to ride his elephant, when a fault-finder, who had been hiding in a bush, yelled, "Your Majesty! Have you looked at the bird?"

The King was startled. He said, "Oh! I forgot. I didn't see the bird after all."

He went in once again and told the pundit, "I want to see your method of educating the bird."

And he saw it. Very pleasing indeed. The method was so overwhelming compared to the bird that one could hardly notice the bird. It seemed it was rather irrelevant to look at the bird. The King understood that the arrangements were faultless.

There was no corn in the cage, no water either. Only heaps of pages had been torn out from heaps of books; and with the tip of a pen, those pages were being stuffed into the bird's mouth. There was no room in the mouth for the bird to squeeze out a cry, let alone a tune. It was really a terribly pleasing sight.

This time, before mounting the elephant, the King ordered the ear-pulling expert to pull the fault-finder's ears severely.

In a rather respectable and predictable way, the bird became half-dead as the days passed. The guardians understood that the situation was hopeful. But still — as its bad habits were — the bird looked at the morning sun and flapped its wings in a very objectionable manner. Some days it was even found to make an attempt to break the rods of the cage with its sickly beak.

The administrator said, "What audacity!"

Immediately, the blacksmith came to the education department with bellows and fire and hammer and chisels. His hits were absolutely spectacular! An iron chain was manufactured and the wings of the bird were cut off.

The King's relatives shook their heads gravely and said, "In this land, you see, the birds are not only stupid, but ungrateful as well."

Then the pundits came with a pen in one hand and a spear in another and did something which one could really call education.

The blacksmith became very well-to-do. His wife got gold ornaments. The administrator gained a title from the King for his alertness.

The bird died — no one knew when. The infamous fault-finder spread the news, "The bird has died."

The King called the nephew and asked, "Dear nephew, what is this that I hear?"

The nephew said, "Your Majesty, the bird's education is now complete."

The King asked, "Does it still jump?"

The nephew said, "God forbid."

"Does it still fly?"

"No."

"Does it sing any more?"

"No."

"Does it scream if it doesn't get food?"

"No."

The King said, "Bring the bird in. I would like to see it."

The bird was brought in. With it came the administrator, the guards, the horsemen. The King felt the bird. It didn't open its mouth and didn't utter a word. Only the pages of books, stuffed inside its stomach, raised a ruffling sound.

Outside, where the gentle south wind and the blossoming woods were heralding spring, the young green leaves filled the

sky with a deep and heavy sigh. The poet's lover gave her parting kiss long ago. He has almost forgotten it in the hiatus of the long separation. But he now remembers her and asks her forgiveness piteously for his lapse of memory. How many leaves of *madhabi* flower wilted, how many noons noisy with dove song, how many evenings have left their golden amnesia, how many nights have written an obscure script and lapsed in oblivion after that last kiss. Even if the poet asks forgiveness of his long lost beloved, he nevertheless is fully aware that his lover, his *Jibandebata,* has already blessed his life with her touch.

Tabu jani. Ekdin tumi dekha diyechhile bale
Ganer phasale mor e jiban uthechhila phale.
Ajo nai shes
… … … … … … …
Tomar parash nahi ar
Kintu ki parashmani rekhe gechha antare amar
Bishver amrita chhabi ajio to dekha dey more
Kshane kshane akaran anander sudhapatra bhare
Amare karay pan. (ibid.)
[I know my life blossomed in songs because
You came to me.
It's still not empty yet
… … … … … … …
Though I miss your touch
I know I carry your touchstone inside me
I still behold the immortal visage of the world
*And drink the cup of gratuitous bliss every moment.] (*Purabi*)*

…I have tried to unravel the mystery and mystique of Rabindranath's *jibandebata* according to my own understanding. My explanation may not be valid even. Yet, I must conclude by claiming that the font of Tagore's sensibilities enriching his poetic career and filling it with variegated forms and fragrance is, undeniably, his consciousness of universal life. This consciousness colored his childhood, adolescence, and youth, and the same

consciousness brings a twilight tinge to fill the sunset hours of his life.

Without daring to take my eyes off him, I climbed onto the verandah and said, “Sit down. I’ll get you something to eat.” We gave him a few mangoes. I sat down on the deck-chair and wondered what to do next. The man looked harmless, but how would I go to sleep with a madman outside my door? The servants did not sleep in the house, there was nobody around to carry a message. It did not seem that the man intended to depart soon. Having finished the mangoes, he settled down comfortably. I would have been happy to keep him busy with some more food, but there was nothing more in the house. What were we to do now? We decided to wait for the guards to arrive on their nightly rounds around Santiniketan. They should have come, but tonight when we needed them, they were late. The minutes passed; we could see neither their flashlights nor hear their whistles. I sat there. Not far away, Miss Petit slept on peacefully. Jyotirmoybabu tried to rouse her, but she only said, “Oh, he is mad, he won ’t hurt us”. Then she turned over and went back to sleep.

But our dark night’s visitor showed no signs of leaving. Nor did it seem a good idea to let him go without ascertaining his destination. If pleased with our services, how long would it be before his return? Faced with no other option, we decided to enlist Miss Petit’s help. This time, Makshirani woke her up and explained the situation. She immediately appeared, dressed in a black kimono. She jumped off the veranda and briskly went up to the intruder,

‘You want to meet Rabindranath Thakur? Come with me, I will take you to him.’ At first, the man stood silent and motionless. Saying

‘Come, come, come with me’, the fearless woman almost dragged him away and disappeared with him into the dark fields. We two intrepid knights of Bengal, stood aside and watched.

Ultimately Jyotirmoybabu accompanied Miss Petit, though it served no purpose other than saving face, and I stayed to guard the family. They soon returned, having turned him over to the watchman at Uttarayan. We slept restfully that night, heartened by the presence of a very brave woman next door.

From then on, it was arranged that a gardener would sleep in the house; we also realised that the guards had been instructed to keep a close watch over us. But we did not have to suffer such a night-time intrusion again. Insanity though seemed to be in the air, for another mad person graced Uttarayan with her presence the next day, a woman this time. She came from Burdwan by train, carrying a cat in her arms, covered with her sari like a baby. She sent message, “Go tell Bouthan that Sarala Debi has come fro m Jorasanko.” She took Pratima Debi by surprise. Though mad, she was still in possession of some sense, and seemed well-informed; her eyes rested with keenness on many of the articles lying around the house. She did not seem prepared to go away with empty hands, so she was given some money, taken to the Bolpur station and put on the train.

One day we heard that a cobra had its den below a neem tree near the Ratan Kuthi kitchen—the servants saw it all the time; once Kashi had only just missed stepping on it. Almost on cue, we began to be showered with innumerable stories about local snakes. Once, a certain gentleman was staying in the same room that we were in now. He was working at the table one day when something fell from above with a thud. Startled, he looked up to see a snake. When he looked up at the ceiling, he saw another one peeping out. prema-murati hridaye jage, ananda nahi dhare.

(Sinking in a sea of nectar, I forget the world, sun and moon disappear. I see no country, no history, no border-an image of love awakes in my heart, I cannot contain my joy.)

It captures the spirit of the original and at the same time works on its own as a beautiful poem. One could not ask for more

A Foreign Shine and Assumed Gestures: The Ersatz Tagore of the West between the arms of the Beloved, in the ecstasy of love’s joy:

Bring the tearful streams of the rainy clouds to your eyes, and cover your heart with the shadow of darkness:

Bring your face nearer to His ear, and speak of the deepest longings of your heart.

Kabir says: “Listen to me, brother! bring the vision of the Beloved in your heart.”

Crisis in Civilization, and a Poet's Alternatives: Education as one alternative weapon

Under the present circumstances it may not sound like an old fashioned romantic cliché if someone declares today, that the aim of all education is to seek a world where mankind can co-exist with nature in an atmosphere of fearless warmth, trust and freedom.

A poet may naturally claim that finding joy in the simple things of life, and compassion for our fellow creatures are the basic values upon which small children's education should be founded, as these happen to hold the secret of creative energy. It dose not sound far fetched because joy and compassion are also the ultimate end of civilization.

What we are doing to ourselves today throughout the world, is driving this planet towards the final moment, where all creation ends, and destruction takes over. Creativity is god's gift to mankind, it cannot grow freely when it is used as a tool for hatred, as creativity is by definition contrary to destruction. Awareness of the responsibilities of being human and of our human failures is the foundation upon which creativity rests.

I am trying to examine how far a poet can foresee a crisis that a civilization might *face, of which education is an important component*, and how, as a sensitive, creative, responsible human being he can think of possible alternatives to counteract the dangers. A poet has positive dreams for this universe. He is also practical and pragmatic, because he cares for this universe. With his knowledge rooted in reality and his instinct and imagination flying into the distant future, he has a shrewd understanding of the course that human history is about to take and is pained and worried about the future of mankind that his poet's vision can foresee.

Our poet used his visionary imagination to predict and to solve the dangers that western civilization was creating for itself and for the rest of the world, *because the east was emulating its ways partly by choice, and partly by choice, and partly through values imposed by colonial educational policies.*

The so-called mystic saint could very clearly see the logical, practical conclusions of a dangerous process that had already

begun its course. And he tried to offer practical solutions, tried to change the course of history as far as he could by spreading his anxious thoughts far and wide and by actively working with the people. *Rabindranath was very much of an educational activist as we understand the term today.* He saw education as a holistic device which prepared a complete human being for the betterment of the world. It was expected to build a child's values right from the beginning.

An incorrigible pacifist, the poet protested against all war and violence, denounced terrorism even when the young men were risking their lives fighting to free his own country.

In those emotionally charged days of nationalist movement he wrote very strongly against the very concept of nationalism, as a divisive element created by western technology that disturbed peaceful coexistence, and encouraged hostility among countries by fanning self-pride. So he talked about connectivity, and internationalism. He wanted his students to imbibe all these values, and possess an inner eye, in order to build a better world based not on separatism and self-pride but on togetherness and mutual trust.

Rabindranath was one of the earliest environmentalists in today's world, who began the act of afforestation to protect the land from erosion, wrote powerful songs about it to spread the message, and had made planting of trees into an annual festival in his school more than seventy five years ago.

A secular educationist per se, he created secular festivities in his school which could be shared by students of all religions. Realising the social and educational significance of sharing rituals and of enjoying festivals together, he invented secular festivals for the old and the young.

There were festivities in his school to celebrate the coming of every season. *Barsho Shesh* and *Naba barsho* for summer, *Barshaa Mangal* for monsoon, *Sharadotsab* for Autumn, *Basantotsab* for Spring. And he encouraged *Paush Mela*, the winter fair introduced by his father Maharshi Debendranath which celebrated the harvest time and brought the rural and the urban together, by making the interchange of culture and commerce possible between the two.

All these were integral parts of Tagore's educational policy, which stretched well beyond the limits of his school, to ways of building future citizens of the world.

Just as introducing the cooperative system in the rural areas was his way of educating the rural poor to function together, in order to earn a livelihood. Taking his lessons from the European farmers, he began a cooperative movement for the *adivasis* in the rural areas, the *samabaayika*, a cooperative banking system for the rural areas.

Disgusted by the flawed colonial education system that was imposed upon Indian children, he offered an alternative schooling system. *The western mode of education, he felt, was more harmful than helpful for us, it steamrolled the children into artificial discipline, taught textbooks that were meant for children of an unfamiliar culture, an unfamiliar climate, forced them to learn too many things by rote without touching base.* It did not reflect the reality of the students' lives. The foreign dress code, for example, was unsuitable for a warm climate, it also kept them away from being in touch with nature and their natural surroundings. So, in his experimental school the students wore comfortable Indian clothes, walked barefoot, to feel the ground beneath their feet, and classes were held in the open air under the shade of trees. The students were encouraged to be creative, to sing, draw, paint, sculpt, dance, act, tell stories, write poetry, cherish open spaces, as well as enjoy a huge playground and a well furnished library. So much for their body and their mind. The prayer meetings in the morning took care of their spirits.

Education could not be complete without knowing your own cultural roots.

Though not a trained anthropologist, but a sensitive and farsighted man, Rabindranath was instinctively aware of the value of preserving tribal culture. Therefore while trying to solve the dire economic needs of the *adivasis,* and educating them in health, agriculture, savings and other modern day practical ways of survival, he encouraged undisturbed preservation of their own tribal culture without interfering with their basic lifestyle.

Tagore wanted a system of education that would bring his people the best of both worlds, the East and the West, the rural and the urban,

the ancient and the contemporary. Yes, a poet can cherish such a dream, and take on its responsibilities, and more.

Tagore was rubbishing the concept of the Nation as a selfish product of western technology that harmed peace by promoting difference. Instead of spreading cooperation, communication and consideration, it promoted suspicion, competition and coercion, and instigated violent passions and hostilities. Like nation, the concepts of race, religion and ethnicity, also divide mankind into warring groups and we urgently need a loose, broad state structure, the concept of "No–Nation," to accommodate all in their own space. Any civilization that rests upon dividing up people, carries the seed of its own destruction within itself. Proper education within the right value system would open the inner eye and make people see the truth.

And political power, he wrote, was dependent on economic power and could not be separated from it. Tagore warned us of a world where "the greed to possess more and more things" (the term 'consumerism' was not yet known) and a demand and supply policy that creates artificial demand among people to possess more and more material goods will bring about a day when technology will destroy the earth. He could foresee a time when *western civilization would lead itself and the rest of the world to destruction. If our education had its roots in Indian culture, he genuinely believed, it could teach mankind how to rise above these misleading divisive notions, and peacefully co-exist.*

Rabindranath felt that in India the colonial education system was imposed form above, the strong discipline in the schools was based on fear, not on sympathy. The mechanically imposed system did not take account of the individual students' state of mind or body, it forced its rules upon them, ultimately killing their souls.

Tota kahini "The Parrot's Tale" is a shattering piece on the abuse of student by an inhuman education system. It is a powerful satire expressing his disapproval of the heartless notion of forced formal education as it was applied in India. An alienated system that took a cruel pride in self and did not care for the other's reality.

Instead of liberating and enriching the mind, mindless colonial education chained it, separated it form its natural surroundings,

stole its joy of life and killed its soul, thus ultimately defeating the sole purpose of education.

In fact he saw western civilization itself as a civilization based on war and fear and *not* on empathy. Education system was an integral part of it. He predicted in the voice of a seer, about war, long before fascism and ethnic murder appeared in Europe—"Those who are constantly developing their instinct of fight and the intolerance of aliens will be eliminated." he wrote (*Nationalism p. 97*). A situation had been created when "a watchful attitude of animosity against Others was taken as a solution to their problems."

Tagore knew in his heart, that this was no permanent solution to human problems. "We are confronted with two alternatives," he wrote, "it will be interminable competition, or cooperation." (*p. 101*). And competition was what Western education system pampered, not cooperation.

Worried about the connected sources of power in the western civilization, industry, commerce, and military, Tagore called the system "the gigantic organization for hurting others and for warding off their blows" (and poor man had no idea then in 1916 how many billions of dollars would be spent in the world for the purpose of Defense, in another 50 years time.)

"Only those people have survived and achieved civilization", he wrote, "who have the spirit of cooperation strong in them." (*p. 99-100*)

The goal of all education, he felt, was to create this spirit of cooperation in human mind. To connect people, to protect and promote human civilization.

The western notion of education, he was afraid, installed wrong values in children. It fanned their sense of separateness, whereas India, he firmly believed, had a better alternative to offer its students, "the spirit of co-operation." which was at the root of human civilization.

Forever our contemporary, Rabindranath had worried about Globalization as well. Addressed by his countrymen as *Bishwa Kabi,* a World Poet, he had always perceived human consciousness as one. A sense of the wholeness of the world rules his heart as well as his mind. Tagore had commented (as early as in 1916) that although the western civilization stressed separateness, rather

than unity, nevertheless, science and technology were bringing the world together. "The whole world is becoming one country through scientific facility. And the moment is arriving when you also must find a basis of unity which is not political." (*p. 99*).

This basis he felt, had to be *a moral power* which alone could hold the center together for mankind. *By moral power he meant "the higher instincts of sympathy and mutual help." (p. 99) Education was meant to develop this moral power of sympathy in mankind.*

But was western education system achieving this end? The first world war had started, when Tagore wrote, "The people who are lacking in this higher moral power, and who therefore cannot combine in fellowship with one another, must perish or live in a state of degradation" (*p.99*)

Nearly a century later, needless to say, we are living upon this planet in a state of perpetual, pitiful degradation, because the world has not succeeded in "combining in fellowship" as the poet wanted.

The keyword to solve the crisis in human civilization, for Rabindranath, perhaps, was transparency. Openness was all. No secret spying outfits, no shutting out of aliens through strict immigration laws, no secret societies for political activists, even if it is for human rights and the independence of a country. Open up your heart, and have an open mind, you'll solve most of your problems. Open up all your doors and windows, in your mind, in your politics, in your trade, in your culture. Let ideas freely flow through the peoples of the world, let us all be in touch, and exchange thoughts. *This was the ultimate aim of education.*

Education should allow us to welcome fresh air into our closed spaces, and break down artificial barriers, because, he felt, real differences among mankind should be recognized not glossed over, nor bulldozed into oneness, yet an overall unity does exist and should be respected.

It needs emotional and intellectual sympathy and cooperation. And this, the poet believed was the whole object of human civilization. Without intellectual sympathy one race can never understand the problems of another. *The British system of education in India, lacked emotional as well as intellectual sympathy. Tota Kahini is a picture of that terrible*

lacunae that leads to the failure of the system. In this context Rabindranath juxtaposed two basic concepts that guide us today, competition and cooperation. One leads to war and the other leads to peace. *The western education system was one that encouraged competition. Tagore wanted to create a fresh education system which will emphasize cooperation.*

The course that human history has taken in the 20th century would have pained Rabindranath no doubt but would not have taken him by surprise. Although he had not heard the words that we live with, like the holocaust, or Hiroshima, the My Lai, or Bosnia, the Green House Effect, or 9/11, and he did not live to see his country divided into three nations, knew neither Khomeini nor Laden, neither Bush nor Modi, — yet he knew exactly which route history was taking, and had tried to warn the world. And to protect this from self-destruction.

Tagore knew the deadly effects of suspicion, fear and hatred among nations, as well as communities, of fundamentalism, and ethnic pride. The heating of the planet through thoughtless deforestation, and poisoning of the earth, water and sky through technology, all this he had known through his visionary's eyes. Imagining the uncertain future of a shortsighted, self-defeating mankind, he had nightmares which were expressed in his last speech, *Crisis in Civilization.*

And all his life Rabindranath had searched for and found a million ways to offer us positive alternatives to counter them. *Creating a new system of education was only one of them.*

In Bangla storytelling formula, a tale begins, *Ek je chhilo raja,* ("There was a king"). In one of his last pieces written in 1941, just before his death, he begins his tale with this formulaic expression *Ek je achhe manush* ("There is a man"). He makes two enormously important changes in the formula, he changes its tense from the past to the present, and changes its subject from a king to a common man. Instead of *"there was"* he writes *"there is"*, and instead of *"a king"* he writes *"a man"*, meaning a *human being.*

These were the alternatives he offered to mankind, to grapple with the crisis our civilization had created for itself, and the world was passing through in 1941. The focus was to be shifted from the past *to the present,* not the *present moment* but the continuous presence, *bartaman,* indicating the eternal presence of mankind upon this planet. And also a shift from the royalty to the common man, from the source of political power, to the source of moral strength.

Not freedom from history, nor submission to it, but continuous adjustment to its needs, trying to *mould* its course, is what we need for the survival of the human spirit.

And that, Tagore believed, was what real education ought to prepare us for.

Let him speak in his own voice.

At a time when interest in Rabindranath Tagore, also in the non-English speaking West, may be said to be entering a new phase, with the promise of a wider readership both inside and outside academic circles, all three of Uma Das Gupta's books, published in impressive succession of each other, carry a weighty significance. From the point of view of contemporary global history too, which numerous scholars across the board of humanities have rightly perceived as having entered a new cycle of imperialism, Tagore's idea(l)s offer much scope for important reappraisal. The three books by Uma Das Gupta on Tagore, two of which are biographies and the third an edited collection of letters, are an important contribution in this direction.

Biography is an art in itself. Not unlike literary translation, it requires its author to be able to read as a critic and write as a writer. Uma Das Gupta succeeds on both counts. Her works dealing with the life of the Bengali polymath are an outcome of years of careful research and extensive reading. While in her short biography of Tagore, her voice is clearly in the forefront, in *Rabindranath Tagore: my life in my words*, she is, as it were, a hidden presence. Her style is engaging, achieving a fine balance which satisfies the general reader and specialist alike. Moreover, her longstanding involvement with Santiniketan, going back to her parents' close association with Tagore, gives her writing an intimacy that brings the reader even closer to the subject.

For a Tagore biography to succeed, however, there is yet another requirement. It is suggested by Tagore's own scepticism

towards retelling life's events as they supposedly *really* happened. Even in the case of autobiography, they are of necessity artistic recreations, in Tagore's case captivatingly so. A sensitive biographer is therefore urged to adopt an approach that is concerned less with the chronicling of external events than with elaborating ideas which informed the artist's long and creative life. Uma Das Gupta clearly takes this as her guideline in organising the contents of both the biographies, a point she makes in her Introduction to *Rabindranath Tagore: my life in my words*: "In the final analysis, [Tagore's] life history is mainly a biography of ideas and artistic creations." Ideas, in Tagore's world, take precedence over life's happenings, though his life was astoundingly rich in both.

The main ideas explored in *Rabindranath Tagore; A Biography* are those of the poet as an educator and rural reformer and not so much as a writer and poet.

This choice seems in part pragmatic, dictated by the author's own area of expertise (her knowledge of the history of Tagore's institution of Visva-Bharati in Santiniketan). At the same time it is motivated by presenting the lesser covered sides of Tagore and his many concerns. Finally, there were the constraints imposed by the OUP biographies series, with its objective that the life histories of men and women who contributed towards building modern India be short.

Thus in just over a hundred pages of ten concisely written chapters, packed with information (sometimes gleaned also from oral sources), the life of Tagore is portrayed through a series of interrelated themes, such as nationalism, internationalism, lessons from India's history, the need for an alternative, world-encompassing education, a search for self-esteem, to mention the main ones.

What we are presented with, is, in Uma Das Gupta's formulation, "an indefatigable man of action": a founder of a school and a university, a pioneer in rural reconstruction work, an untiring globe-trotter out on a mission, in other words a man struggling every step of the way to make a difference in the lives of his countrymen and "bring change", in what small way he could, "to an unequal and unjust world".

Oftentimes against great odds and little understanding both at home and abroad, Tagore is seen to emerge as what another eminent scholar William Radice has termed a "one-man counter-culture".

If Uma Das Gupta's biography extends the portrayal of Tagore beyond the common perception of him as a poet and writer – and the subject of Tagore's creative writing is dealt within fewer than ten pages – there is certain poetic justice in that she closes the biography with a poem.

The social consciousness in Tagore was never separate from his artistic consciousness; the man of action was never far from the contemplative man.

The ethical source from which both drew was essentially the same: "a universal humanist outlook". This was the imaginative ideal, the biography makes clear, in terms of which Rabindranath was ceaselessly moving, with many twists and turns on the way, from occasionally quite traditionalist beginnings, but over the years through ever-widening sympathies and sensibilities as both a man and poet.

Closing the biography with a poem which bespeaks a strong a sense of remoteness, even failure, in the face of the world's vast impenetrable demands, serves also another point. It shows Tagore at his most vulnerable and human.

The poem's selection seems almost strategic in that it resists the temptation for a larger-than-life portrayal of the poet, as it also importantly suggests a point of contact between him and our own individual lives. "I believe that if we can inwardly relate to this poem", says Uma Das Gupta, "we shall find he is there as a friend in our lives helping us to live with honesty in our weaknesses and our strengths." That is surely the best way to keep Tagore's legacy meaningful and alive.

One of the many strengths of this short biography is the wide assortment of citations, sourced from Tagore's own writings but also from those of others, with which Uma Das Gupta weaves the threads of the main body of her text into a tight and multicoloured fabric. Each and every chapter is preceded by at least two pithy quotations, which help set the tone and drive her point home. It

seems she misses no opportunity to give Tagore – or anyone else deserving, for that matter – a chance to speak.

Even her decision to confine herself to selecting letters for the *Appendix* from the body of his letters written in English is guided by her desire "to represent him in his own words". Language too is no barrier: where English translation is unavailable or inadequate, she resorts to her own translation skills and opens another chink for the non-Bengali readers to appreciate Tagore more fully.

All these skills come to bear more fully in her *Rabindranath Tagore: my life in my words*, a book of almost four hundred pages. Although this project was initiated by Penguin books and not the author herself (she was invited to "write" Tagore's autobiography), it feels as though it had grown organically from her shorter biography.

The sources she draws on and translates from are vast and impressive. She had not only plumbed the Rabindra Bhavana archives in Santiniketan but also the Department of Western Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library (University of Oxford) and Senate House Library (London) for the papers of Tagore's various English correspondents. To know that only the Santiniketan archives house close to six thousand letters is to get a sense of the Herculean task she undertook.

There are as many as 117 entries translated by her from the original Bengali, nearly all of which appear here for the first time in English. Only a few of the letters to his wife and children had previously appeared in Krishna Dutta's and Andrew Robinson's translation in their *Selected Letters of Rabindranath Tagore*.

Those who do not read Bengali, but love Tagore and want to access as much of his writing as possible will be extremely pleased by this turnout. In the meantime, another important autobiographical work, *Âtmaparichay*, which Uma Das Gupta draws on and translates from, has also appeared for the first time in a full English translation.

Having more than one translation at hand to draw on is always useful. It gives a fuller, and more contested, picture of what for non-Bengali speakers must remain an unattainable

original. The site of contestation opened up by the two different translations of some of Tagore's letters to his family, particularly to his wife, is indeed interesting. It raises questions that seem to divide opinion among Bengalis to this day. Consider this example from one of the letters Tagore wrote to Mrinalini Devi. In Uma Das Gupta's translation, the passage reads:

Please don't work any harder for my happiness. Your love is enough. But it would be very nice if you and I could work together and think together with one mind.

I know that cannot always happen even if we wish it […] I don't wish to leave you *out* of anything. Everyone has the right to do things their own way, as they would like to. *It may not be possible for you to agree with my wishes and inclinations every time* – I would not worry about it. It is good enough if you spare me sadness wherever possible, and sweeten my life the way you do with your love (emphasis mine). While in Dutta and Robinson, the same passage is rendered as:

> *To make me happy you need not try very hard – your sincere love is enough. Of course, if you and I could be united in everything we do and think, that would be best – but one cannot will such things […] I do not want to leave you* behind *in anything – but at the same time I am afraid of forcing you. Each of us has his own separate taste, inclination and ability.* You do not possess the power to make your own nature correspond with my wishes and inclinations. *Therefore, instead of torturing yourself about it, if you sweeten my life with your love and care, and try to protect me from unnecessary pain, your efforts will be precious to me (my emphasis).*

Every translation is inevitably also an act of interpretation, but the two interpretations emerging from the above passages are pulling in two quite different directions. Telling your wife how much you value her love, hoping to transcend all separation and merge in both thought and action, while realizing that is unattainable, is quite different from telling you wife that she is incapable (*you do not posses the power*) of moulding herself to your expectations, so she need not *torture* herself about it, for inevitably she will be left *behind*, something you deeply regret.

The interpretative thrust that guides Dutta and Robinson rests on their conviction that "while Rabindranath was certainly affectionate towards [Mrinalini], his feelings did not seem to have had the depth of genuine companionship". Elsewhere in their introduction the finality of their verdict is even more disparaging: "Rabindranath's simple affection for his young wife Mrinalini, and her lack of sophistication, are clear from this letter, written on board ship to Europe".

In contrast, Uma Das Gupta's reading evokes an altogether softer, more intimate, at times deeply touching, voice. "His letters tell us how closely he communicated with her, how much he wanted his family near him". If one interpretation places Tagore's young family "at the centre of his life", the other sees his family to have been an increasingly subordinate part of "the greater cause to which he felt his life was dedicated". Inadvertently, as with all translated texts, we find ourselves pondering how much of what we are reading is the actual voice of Tagore and how much the voice of the translator.

Where do the two successfully converge and where do they pull apart? The greatest challenge of any translation is in getting the author's voice to come across as authentically as possible in another language, and to resist the temptation of imposing one's own. It is an exercise in humility as much as in linguistic aptitude. Through his own trials as a translator of his own writings, Tagore came to understand the vital importance, as well as the difficulty, of achieving both.

Translation is clearly a sensitive issue. In the appositely titled *A Difficult Friendship; Letters of Edward Thompson and Rabindranath Tagore 1913 – 1940* it was the very question of translation that first drove a wedge between Tagore and the ex-Methodist missionary, historian, novelist and poet, who was also his first serious Western biographer. With its overt criticism of Tagore, Thompson's second biography brought their friendship to a near breaking point. Whether that criticism was justified is an issue that still animates discussion in "Tagore circles".

Edward Thompson (1886 – 1967) was born of Wesleyan Methodist missionary parents and spent his first six years in India. He was then taken to England by his parents, only to return at the age of 24, taking up a teaching post at Bankura College in southern Bengal. He learned Bengali well enough to be able to read and appreciate Tagore in the original. Entering Tagore's life at the crucial juncture of the poet receiving the Nobel Prize, when having English translations became a matter of increased urgency, Thompson, being a creative writer himself, was drawn into the intricate web of Tagore's many literary collaborators and associates.

He was a zealous participant, sometimes over-zealous, and Tagore, having risen in stature overnight and suddenly pulled into the vortex of public life, did not find it easy to cope with Thompson's eagerness to assist him. "When men thickly surround me and clamour for their dues", he wrote to Thompson in what must have been more than a subtle attempt to ward him off, "they do not get my best".

Indeed, in this exchange Tagore reveals a side to his character that those who desire to see him as superhuman would prefer to ignore. There was certainly something of a prima donna in the way he would engage Thompson when it suited him and dismiss him when it did not.

The ins-and-outs of what came to pass between the poet, the translator-*cum*-proofreader circle of Tagore's English collaborators, and the Macmillan Company of London is minutely recorded and presented in another of Uma Das Gupta's sophisticated and scholarly books.

All the surviving letters between the two men are arranged into eight chronologically arranged chapters and annotated with comprehensive notes. The book also has a substantial introduction covering the wider background to their relationship, as well as separate smaller introductions to the letter sections, providing further context and commentary to their exchange.

At times the commentary seems almost more interesting than the letters, which often deal with the practicalities of their working relationship, and are rather brusque and factual. Certainly they are not as engaging as the letters Tagore wrote to William Rothenstein or C. F. Andrews, his other two lifelong friends and

associates. It was only towards the end of their difficult friendship, once they had both managed "to overcome national egoism, personal pain, and mutual annoyance" (Das Gupta's 2003: 2), and were able to share their ideas with understanding that their letters became more full-bodied.

Tagore was able to appreciate more fully Thompson's "interest in international justice" and assimilate his harsh criticism of his own translations in a moment of painful self-realisation: "I have done gross injustice to my original productions partly owing to my incompetence and partly to carelessness". Thompson, on the other hand, gave Tagore all the recognition he deserved: "[Y]ou stand for a new kind of man, neither Eastern nor Western but a reconciler of the best of both".

While the two biographies are clearly aimed at a wide readership across the English-speaking world, *Difficult Friendship* is more specifically a Tagoreophile treat. It complements nicely earlier works dealing with this troublesome but ultimately fulfilling relationship across the colonial divide, especially E. P. Thompson's brilliant study of his father's relationship with the Bengali poet, aptly titled *Alien Homage*.

If there is an air of polemics surrounding this corner of Tagore studies (E. P. Thompson apart, we can mention also William Radice, Harish Trivedi, and Mary Lago), Uma Das Gupta chooses to steer away from these controversies. In her characteristic fashion she prefers to present the facts and let them speak for themselves.

10

Politics and Nationalism

Once Tagore acquired an image in the West, those in Bengal who were previously censorious of his work suddenly began to hold him in esteem, leaders such as Gandhi sought his comradeship. He had achieved his objective. Thereby he quickly acquired a nationalistic image which held sway all over India, and eventually he allowed himself to be viewed as a religio-political leader of a stature almost comparable to Gandhi. This image, which had its origins in his Western image, further reinforced the latter, through nationalistic propaganda. All major Indian political leaders felt called upon to comment on his life and work; of these judgments we examine only the most salient, made by the most eminent.

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan who, being a Tamil, did not possess a knowledge of Tagore's work comparable to that possessed by any ordinary educated Bengali, summarised Tagore's oeuvre as follows:

"In all Rabindranath's work three features are striking: (1) The ultimateness of spiritual values to be obtained by inward honesty and cultivation of inner life; (2) the futility of mere negation or renunciation and the need for a holy or a whole development of life; and (3) the positive attitude of sympathy for all, even the lowly and the lost. It is a matter for satisfaction to find an Indian leader insisting on these real values of life at a time when so many old things are crumbling away and a thousand new ones are springing up."

This verdict almost defies comment; so vast is its scope, and so vague is the sense in which the words have been used, that

one might employ this very summary in characterising the work not of Tagore but of any one amongst Gandhi, Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghose. No Westerner, who has not read Tagore, can guess from this statement that he was primarily a composer of Bengali songs and poetry.

Jawaharlal Nehru's judgment is, of course, frankly political, and he too was unable to read even a single page of *Gitabitaan* in the original Bengali: "... Rabindranath Tagore has given to our nationalism the outlook of internationalism and has enriched it with art and music and the magic of his words, so that it has become the full-blooded emblem of INDIA'S awakened spirit." (Emphasis mine)

Perhaps Nehru the intellectual (as opposed to the politician) had the perspicacity to see, though he found it imprudent to state, that it was far easier for Tagore to reach out to the Bengali-speaking people of (the erstwhile) East Pakistan through his songs and thereby become an emblem, whether full-blooded or not, of its awakening spirit, which was to lead to the creation of Bangladesh merely seven years after his decease, than to enthrall entire populations of the speakers of Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Gujarati et al who, knowing no Bengali, had no access to his songs and poetry at all.

And Gandhi proclaimed, "I regard the poet as a sentinel warning us against the approach of enemies called Bigotry, Lethargy, Intolerance, Ignorance, Inertia and other memebers of that brood." From all this emerges an image of a religio-political leader, always on the road, addressing hortatory speeches and sermons to great masses of people; its superficiality can be seen by any educated Bengali.

But if such be the utterances of non-Bengali Indians who, on account of their exalted political positions, were naturally taken seriously in the West, one can hardly blame Westerners alone for creating a grandiosely false image of Tagore.

THE MAN HIMSELF

An author who has made bold to claim that the Western image of Tagore is ersatz will perhaps be expected to set forth an account of his true identity, undistorted and unaberrated.

The fact of the matter, unfortunately, is that Tagore's temperament was essentially unsuited to an active public or political life; he was fundamentally a loner whose creative energies found their ideal expression in solitude. Though he was aggressively litigious-he had been engaged in furious lawsuits over property with several of his siblings (inclusive of his once-beloved Jyotirindranath) and even when on his deathbed in 1941, was involved in a legal battle with his only surviving sibling Barnakumari (who was at that time about 90)-he was not emotionally equipped to withstand the wear and tear of public censure and ridicule to which every politician and active public person is inevitably subject; poets seldom are.

Here I must let the man speak for himself. When he was thirty-one, he wrote: "Intimacy with men is absolutley intolerable to me. Unless I have plenty of room around myself I cannot stretch my limbs, settle down and unpack my mind. I pray that mankind may prosper, but they should not jostle me... "

Again, when he was thirty-two he wrote, speaking of his mind: "It is only when it gets a little solitude that it can muse to its heart's content, look round itself, and express its feelings in all their meanderings exactly as it pleases."

Chaudhuri rightly states, "It is from this Tagore that his greatest literary achievement came out. He is at his greatest as a writer when he is speaking as a lone soul with a lone voice to lone souls."

As for romantic love, the exultant eroticism of ancient and medieval Sanskrit literature provided him with imageries, but the mood of his songs of love are often, if not always, of sorrow and despair. Throughout his life he yearned in vain for an idealised form of romantic love, and this failure caused him intense anguish till his last days. His songs express it in a delicate manner with which many Bengalis, similarly deprived, can identify their feelings.

Out of a plethora of songs as examples, I choose only one:

"You are indeed my heart's desire,

I have nothing and no one in this world except you.

I shall lose myself in my separation from you, and thereby live in you

Through long days, long nights, long months, and long years.

If you love someone else, and never come back,

May you get all that you seek,

And I bear all the sorrow that there may be. "

But it was his profound love of nature that enabled him to save his soul. Once again, we must let the man speak for himself:

> *"I feel that once upon a time I was at one with the rest of the earth, that grass grew green upon me, that the autumn sun fell on me and under its rays the warm scent of youth wafted from every pore of my far-flung evergreen body. As my waters and mountains lay spread out through every land, dumbly soaking up the radiance of a cloudless sky, an elixir of life and joy was inarticulately secreted from the immensity of my being. So it is that my feelings seem to be those of our ancient planet, ever germinant and efflorescent, shuddering with sun-kissed delight. The current of my consciousness streams through each blade of grass, each sucking root, each sappy vein, and breaks out in the waving fields of corn and in the rustling leaves of the palms."*

One man, his solitude, his yearnings for love, and his love of nature — all experienced and expressed through a highly sensuous musical and poetic intuition: this is the essential Tagore.

That his image in the West was a brittle fabric of appreciation based on incomprehension had of course become clear to him, if it had not been evident right from the beginning. But the very Bengalis whose harsh censure and ridicule had pained him and against whom he had hit out time and again were not susceptible to the misinterpretations to which the West was prone; the Bengalis sang his songs spontaneously and with genuine passion, in celebration of the seasons, of love and even of religion. Inasmuch as he had been at perfect harmony with Bengal, its rivers, verdant fields and villages, his songs, especially the seasonal ones, had an enduring character free from all temporary literary or religious fads and fashions, and consequently merged with the life of the Bengali mind completely. He remarked in his last days that the fate of his poems and stories was uncertain, but his songs had indeed found a lasting lodgment in the hearts of Bengalis. Bengal,

in the end, was his true home, as it had been at the dawn of his life.

But what did the West gain from him? I shall have to quote Alex Aronson:

> *"A great scholar would expound the philosophy of Rabindranath in terms of metaphysics and mysticism; a politician would elucidate his position in European politics; litterateurs would establish comparisons and parallels; and priests of various denominations would exalt or debase his spiritual message. Everyone of them had his own axe to grind, and Rabindranath became a useful and innocent tool which they knew how to handle for their own ulterior purposes. So it came about that he was unknowingly made to represent certain tendencies in the party-politics of various nations, that his name was freely used for the sake of either appeasing or inflaming national hatred, and that the various religious or pseudo-racial denominations used him for their own ends. The litterateurs were often uncritical and outrageously condescending. In addition to all this an atmosphere of sensationalism was being created around him symptomatic of the loss of mental equilibrium, and perhaps also of the loss of all beliefs in the West."*
>
> *".... Rabindranaths's voice when it was heard in Europe evoked (in Mathew arnold's words about Shelley) "a vision of beauty and radiance, indeed, but availing nothing, effecting nothing."*

Indeed, now that we approach the centenary of Tagore's first encounter with the West, and find feeble voices still shrieking in order to continue projecting an ersatz Western image of the poet based on incomprehension and academic sensationalism, what profound religious faith, what luminous truth about humanity, is being upheld by his Western champions?

We might well wonder.

THE YEAR 1400

A hundred years from today who are you, sitting, reading a poem of mine, under curiosity's sway-a hundred years from today?

Not the least portion of this young spring's morning bliss, neither blossom nor birdsong, nor any of its scarlet splashes can

I drench in passion and despatch to your hands a hundred years hence!

Yet do this, please: unlatch your south-faced door, just sit at your window for once; basking in fantasy, eyes on the far horizon, figure out if you can: how one day a hundred years back roving delights in a free fall from a heavenly region had touched all that there was-the infant Phalgun day, utterly free, was frenzied, all agog, while borne on brisk wings, the south wind pollen-scent-brushed had suddenly arrived and in a flash dyed the earth with all youth's hues a hundred years before your day.

There lived then a poet, ebullient of spirit, his heart steeped in song, who wanted to open his words like so many flowers with so much passion one day a hundred years back.

A hundred years from today who is the new poet whose songs flow through your homes? To him I convey this springtime's gladsome greetings.

May my vernal song find its echo for a moment in your spring day in the throbbing of your hearts, in the buzzing of your bees, in the rustling of your leaves a hundred years from today.

INFLUENCE AND LEGACY

These songs are regarded as cultural treasures of Bengal in both Bangladesh and West Bengal (India).

The *Rabindrasangeet*, which deal with varied themes are immensely popular and form a foundation for the Bengali ethos that is comparable to, perhaps even greater than, that which Shakespeare has on the English-speaking world. It is said that his songs are the outcome of 500 years of literary & cultural churning that the Bengali community has gone through.

In his book *Caste and Outcaste*, Dhan Gopal Mukerji has said that these songs transcend the mundane to the aesthetic and express all ranges and categories of human emotion. The poet had given a voice to all—big or small, rich or poor. The poorest boatman on the Ganges as well as the rich landlord find expression for their emotional trials and tribulations in Tagore's songs.

Rabindrasangeet has evolved into a distinctive school of music. Practitioners of this genre are known to be fiercely protective of

tradionalist practice. Novel interpretations and variations have drawn severe censure in both West Bengal and Bangladesh. And like Beethoven's symphonies or Vilayat Khan's sitar, Rabindrasangeet demands an educated, intelligent & cultured audience to appreciate the lyrical beauty of his compositions.

He was among the first to recognize that cinema should have its own language. In 1929 he wrote, "The beauty and grandeur of this form in motion has to be developed in such a way that it becomes self-sufficient without the use of words." The inherent beauty & depth of tagore's songs have persuaded a number of filmmakers to use Tagore's songs in their films including Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, Nitin Bose, Tapan Sinha and Kumar Shahani.His songs were also used in British, European & Australian movies just to capture the mood of a cinematic situation & to reveal a delicate interplay of relationships.

Ritwik Ghatak said of Tagore, "That man has culled all my feelings from long before my birth…I read him and find that...I have nothing new to say." In his *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (The Cloud-capped Star) and *Subarnarekha*, Ghatak uses *Rabindrasangeet* to express the poignancy of post-Partition Bengal.

Two of the songs written by Tagore are the national anthems of India and Bangladesh. These are:

- Bangladesh: "*Amar Shonar Bangla*"
- India: "*Jana Gana Mana*"

SINGERS OF RABINDRASANGEET

Some of the well-known singers of *Rabindrasangeet* are:

- Pankaj Mullick also known as the *First Man* of Rabindrasangeet.
- Hemanta Kumar Mukhopadhyay
- Debabrata Biswas also known as the *Second Man* of Rabindrasangeet & unarguably the most popular among male voices.
- Subinoy Roy.
- Kanika Bandyopadhyay her original name was "Anima" but Tagore had renamed her "Kanika" and Abanindranath

Tagore used to call her *Mohar* by which name she is known to many of her dedicated listeners.

- Suchitra Mitra
- Rajeshwari Dutta was originally from Punjab. She was married to a well-known Bengali poet, Sudhindranath Dutta. She made her mark in the classical-based *tappa* and other compositions
- Argha Sen
- Ashoketaru Bandyopadhyay
- Beethin Bandopadhyay
- Banani Ghosh
- Dwijen Mukhopadhay
- Chinmay Chattopadhyay
- Gita Ghatak
- Iffatara Khan
- Mita Huq
- Nilima Sen
- Promita Mollik
- Purba Dam
- Rajasree
- Rajeswari Dutta
- Rezwana Chowdhury Banya
- Ritu Guha
- Roma Mondal
- Rono Gohathakurota
- Ruma Guha Thakurta
- Sadi Mohammad
- Sagar Sen
- Sumitra Sen
- Sanghamitramitra Gupta
- Susil Mullick
- Swagatalakshmi Dasgupta

- Swapan Gupta
- Ashok Das
- Monica Ghose
- Sasha A.K. Ghoshal

TEACHERS OF *RABINDRASANGEET*

Some of the well-known teachers of Rabindrasangeet (barring Tagore himself) are:

- Dinendra Nath Tagore
- Shantideb Ghosh
- Ashoketaru Bandyopadhyay
- Dwijen Mukhopadhay
- Shailaja Ranjan Majumdar
- Maya Sen
- Suchitra Mitra
- Rajasree
- Kanika Bandyopadhyay
- Rezwana Chowdhury Banya
- Subinoy Roy
- Swagatalakshmi Dasgupta

In Bangladesh, prominent Rabindrasangeet trainers who have contributed immensely in developing new artistes include :

- Sanjida Khatun
- Wahidul Haq deceased
- Ajit Ray
- Anisur Rahman
- Papia Sarwar
- Lily Islam
- Rezwana Chowdhury Banya
- Selina Malek
- Mita Haq
- Sadi Mohammad

- Fazle Nizami deceased
- Hamida Haq
- Atiqul Islamdeceased
- Chanchal Khan (In Australia now)
- Kaderi Kibria (In USA)
- Sirajus Salekin (In Australia)
- Rakhi Chakravarti (Overseas)
- Salma Akhbar
- Tapan Mahmud
- Bulbul Islam
- Mahadev Shaha
- Shahjahan Kamal Taught at Jhankar Academy, Bongio Sankskritic Chakra (Dhaka), Presently teaching at Alampia School of Music (Toronto).

Ekla Chalo Re

Jodi Tor Dak Shune Keu Na Ashe is a song written by Rabindranath Tagore, part of the Rabindra Sangeet canon. It exhorts the listener to continue his or her journey, despite abandonment or lack of support from others.

The song is often quoted in the context of political or social change movements; Mahatma Gandhi cited it as one his favorite songs.

In Bengali Romanization

Jodi tor ðak shune keu na ashe tôbe êkla chôlo re,

Êkla chôlo, êkla chôlo, êkla chôlo, êkla chôlo re.

Jodi keu kôtha na kôe, ore ore o ôbhaga,

Jodi shôbai thake mukh firaee shôbai kôre bhôe—

Tôbe pôran khule

O tui mukh fuþe tor moner kôtha êkla bôlo re.

Jodi shôbai fire jae, ore ore o ôbhaga,

Jodi gôhon pôthe jabar kale keu fire na chae—

Tôbe pôther kãþa

O tui rôktomakha chôrontôle êkla dôlo re.

Jodi alo na dhôre, ore ore o ôbhaga,

Jodi jhô°-badole ãdhar rate duar dêe ghôre—

Tôbe bojranôle

Apon buker pãjor jalie nie êkla jôlo re.

Tagore's English Translation

If they answer not to thy call walk alone,

If they are afraid and cower mutely facing the wall,

O thou of evil luck, open thy mind and speak out alone.

If they turn away, and desert you when crossing the wilderness,

O thou of evil luck, trample the thorns under thy tread, and along the blood-lined track travel alone.

If they do not hold up the light when the night is troubled with storm,

O thou of evil luck, with the thunder flame of pain ignite thy own heart and let it burn alone.

In Popular Culture

- The song was used in the 2005 film Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: The Forgotten Hero
- "Ekla Chalo Re" is the title of a book by the Jain Acharya Mahaprajna
- The song was famously sung by Vinoba Bhave during the beginnings of his Bhoodan movement, with "blessed" substituted for "unfortunate".

Tagore Songs unique treasure of Rabindranath's creative life. Opinions differ on when he first started composing songs. According to some authorities, his first song was composed when he was 12; some others say he began composing songs in 1875 at the age of 14. He then composed 'Jval jval chita dvigun dvigun' for the play *Sarojini* written by his elder brother JYOTIRINDRANATH TAGORE. The same year two songs by him appeared in print as offerings for HINDU MELA. One of them, 'Tomari tare ma sanpinu e deha' (O mother, this body of mine is dedicated to you), was

undisputedly composed by Tagore; but the other, 'Ek sutre bandhiyachhi sahasrati man' (I have tied a thousand minds with one string), is regarded by some as having been composed or set to music by Jyotirindranath Tagore. If 'Tomari tare ma …' was composed at the age of 12, it was certainly Tagore's first song. For his last birthday he composed 'He nutan, dekha dik ar-bar janmer pratham shubhaksan' (Hail the new, let the auspicious moment of birth appear again) on 7 May 1941. This means he composed songs for 68 years. All his 2,232 songs have been compiled in his *Gitabitan*.

The tradition of pre-Rabindranath Bangla songs took a new turn in the Tagore family. Rabindranath's father DEBENDRANATH TAGORE, brothers SATYENDRANATH TAGORE and Jyotirindranath Tagore and others composed a genre of devotional songs for Brahma Samaj prayers. In this respect they were following RAMMOHUN ROY. Rabindranath enriched the genre by following his brothers in composing Brahma Sangit in the classical style.

Tagore songs are deeply influenced by classical influence. Although he himself did not learn CLASSICAL MUSIC formally, the family atmosphere of cultivating this form of music enables him to compose many of his songs in the Hindustani classical style. On the occasion of Brahmo Samaj's *Magh* festival, he composed many devotional songs in the Hindustani classical style. The Tagore songs composed in this tradition are treasures of our music. Many of his songs abound in the classical forms of *sthayi*, *antara*, *sanchari* and *abhog*. The influence of the classical style is also manifested in the tunes, words and articulation of the songs. During his childhood, several music teachers from the Vishnupur gharana used to come to the Tagore house. Of them, Vishnuchandra Chakravarty and Radhikaprasad Goswami left a deep impression on Tagore's mind. The RAGAS and *raginis* heard in his childhood managed to cast long shadows on his songs.

Rabindranath established his uniqueness by applying multiple ragas and raginis in a single song. For instance, he applied four ragas-*lalit*, *vibhas*, *jogiya* and *ashavari*-in his song 'Achhe duhkha achhe mrtyu, biraha dahana lage'. To him, theme was more important than ragas. Even in folk tunes he experimented with a mixture of ragas to create a genre of his own TAPPA is yet another form that has enriched Tagore songs. The use of tappa in giving expression to Bengali emotions has been noteworthy. Rabindranath composed some songs following the tappa tradition of 'Shori Miar Punjabi'. His own tappas utilize no discernible combination of TALS. The use of folk tunes is also obvious in Tagore tappas.

Rabindranath composed tunes for some Vedic and Bauddha hymns to create devotional songs. He also composed a number of songs with the help of South Indian tunes. The folksongs of Bengal have significantly influenced Tagore songs too. He used extensively tunes and styles from BAUL, KIRTAN, shyamasangit, *sari* and even *kathakata* to give his songs a distinctive flavour and beauty.

Rabindranath's familiarity with the folk tunes, and kirtan, syamasangit and ramprasadi is seen in the songs he composed between 1884 and 1886. The use of baul tunes became noticeable since 1905. While agitating against the PARTITION OF BENGAL, Rabindranath realized that the best way to touch the hearts of the people was to utilize the tunes drawn from the soil. Twenty songs composed by him at the time were published in a book entitled *Baul*. Among them were Gandhiji's favourite song 'Yadi tor dak shune keu na ase tabe ekla chalo re' (If no one comes to respond to your call, go forth all alone) and 'Amar sonar Bangla, ami tomay bhalobasi' (My Bengal of gold, I love you), later adopted as the NATIONAL ANTHEM of Bangladesh. Rabindranath also used folk tunes from different Indian states like Mumbai, Gujarat, Madras, Mysore and Punjab (Sikh bhajan).

The Tagore family was familiar with many western musical tunes. In his AUTOBIOGRAPHY, Rabindranath speaks of a book called *Irish Melodies* that he read early in life. His grandfather DWARAKANATH TAGORE was known to have taken lessons in western music. The family of Rabindranath's elder brother Satyendranath Tagore used to cultivate western music. His knowledge about western music was enhanced when at the age of 17 he went to England to study bar-at-law and had an opportunity to live with different English families. He applied many western tunes in the songs of his musical plays *Valmiki Pratibha* (1881) and *Kalmrgaya* (1882). Thanks to his unique abilities, he could maintain his own distinctive note even after using varied elements from other musical sources.

Because of this quality, his tunes can be easily identified even when he has based them on other musical forms.

Rabindranath has used many tals in composing songs. These included *chautal*, *ada chautal*, *dhamar*, *adatheka*, *surfankta*, *yat*, *jhanptal*, *trital*, *ektal*, *teoda*, *dadra*, *kaharba* and *adkhemta*. He has utilized some tals which are new to North Indian music; these include *sasthi*, *jhampak*, *rupkada*, *navatal*, *ekadashi* and *navapanchatal*. In poetic measures too, Rabindranath showed some distinctiveness, especially in using multiple times. He has occasionally used multiple tempos in a single song and has skillfully mixed times and tempos to create a very unusual musical form.

Usually songs have a preponderance of tunes and measures but Tagore songs are essentially poetic and therefore their poetic themes are as important as their tunes. The thematic variety of his songs reflects the rich emotional life of Bengalis. *Gitabitan*, his main and final compilation of songs, has a large number of sections. His devotional songs have been listed under 'Puja', love songs under 'Prem', songs on seasons under 'Prakrti', patriotic songs under 'Swadesh', occasional songs under 'Anusthanik', and miscellaneous songs under 'Vichitra'. Some of his songs for his stage plays are satirical. The divisions of his songs relating to worship, love and nature are no doubt arbitrary as the themes are often intermixed so overwhelmingly that drawing clear lines between them becomes difficult.

His occasional songs treat an amazing variety of themes. He wrote songs on weddings, births and deaths, house warming, tree planting, plowing land, sinking a tubewell, tying rakhi, convocations, inauguration ceremonies, harvesting and even teaching of martial art to women. This has made Tagore songs an essential part of life of the Bengalis who sing them in happiness, in distress, and at work.

Rabindranath once said that a song begins where a poem ends and that the message of music travels further than that of words. He used to ride on the wings of music in utter delight to spread his ideals, something he also did through his poems.

Visva-Bharati has so far published 63 volumes of *Gitabitan*, arranging the Tagore songs in alphabetical order with notations.

A few more volumes remain to be published. Rabindranath's titanic intellect found manifestation in almost every facet of fine art. One of the most outstanding amongst them is Rabindra-sangeet, which embodies a breathtaking fusion of his musicianship and poetic genius. Such was the impact of this creation, that it not only withstood the test of time for more than a century, but also secured a unique place for itself in the subcontinent's musical culture.

The objective of this article is not to deliberate on the beauty and depth of Rabindra-sangeet. There are countless works in this regard by people far more knowledgeable on Rabindranath and Rabindra-sangeet, and the influence of Classical music on Rabindra Sangeet has been amply analyzed and now stands as an accepted fact. What this article aims to focus on, is how and to what extent has Rabindra-sangeet, in its turn, influenced the more traditional forms of music and its exponents. In particular, there has been a pronounced influence of Rabindra-sangeet on some of the noted classical instrumentalists of North India. There are indeed scopes of debate over the rationale and the extent of potential of this influence, but the fact remains that it cannot be denied. There are far too many precedents in its favor.

In the succeeding sections of this article, it has been attempted to investigate, what elements in Rabindra-sangeet triggered this kind of influence on Indian Classical instrumentalists and what consequences it led to.

Traditional elements in Rabindra-sangeet

It is an accepted fact that elements of Indian classical music have been used in an extremely intelligent and effective fashion in Rabindra-sangeet. It is indeed one of its most significant features. The application of this ingredient was however dictated principally by the perceived requirements of the mood evoked in the song, which was after all the core entity of his creation. An overt application of elements derived from classical music would have conflicted with this requirement. Therefore the application of classical elements, more often than not, had been subtle, and only to the extent necessary to express the emotive content of the song. Many of his songs therefore have only a partial conformity to

ragas. Of course, in cases where he found the tonal colour of the raga in almost total conformity to the sentiment of the song, he adopted the raga in its entirety. On certain instances, we even see authentic classical compositions adopted faithfully in respect of both melody and rhythm, set to outstanding Bengali lyric. The urge to evoke a particular mood to his own satisfaction, often led him to blend ragas in unexpectedly beautiful and interesting ways, or to look for uncharted and unexplored nuances within the known frameworks of ragas. It was on these occasions that some of his most beautiful and intellectually challenging creations came forth.

The influence of Rabindra-sangeet on Indian classical Instrumental music is perhaps due to the fact that much of what is played on Indian classical instruments today is derived from vocal music, principally of classical as also to some extent, of non classical origin (like lighter variety of compositions derived from folk music such as *Kirtan* or *Bhatiyali*). Classical instrumentalists have always looked for newer ideas and inspirations to feed their imagination not merely from these sources. Rabindra-sangeet with its sheer beauty and lyricism combined with the exquisite embodiment of the classical genre, naturally turns out to be a very potential resource to prospect.

Influence of Rabindra sangeet on Classical Instruments and Instrumentalists.

The Beginning: The pioneering example in this regard was set by none other than the great Ustad Vilayat Khan Sahib. He had adopted the famous song, *Bhenge Mor Gharer Chabi,* into a beautiful, lilting light-classical composition. This was an interesting instance of a distinguished classical musician being motivated to imbibe the beauty and lyricism in Rabindra-sangeet.

The next example in this regard was set by Sri Buddhadev Dasgupta, the renowned sarodiya. Being a person with cultural roots in Bengal, he might have had a greater exposure to Rabindra-sangeet in general. His approach towards adoption of Rabindra-sangeet to classical music, naturally, was a more involved one. Out of the numerous classical compositions he has derived so far from Rabindra Sangeet, there are examples of transformations inspired by a variety of different aspects such as melodic appeal, interesting and unexpected application of raga movements, interesting ways of blending of ragas and even re-discovery of old classical compositions. His work in this area is based on years of exhaustive study and research in collaboration with Rabindra-sangeet experts like Shubhash Chowdhury.

The introduction of these kind of compositions in the arena of authentic Indian Classical Music took place over the decades of sixties and seventies. The initiation had been cautious and measured, considering the conventional mind-set of most of the contemporary musicians and listeners. For example, Sri Dasgupta played his first sarod composition, derived from the Rabindrasageet *Shedin dujone*, in his AIR National Program in 1978, dubbing it as a "light classical composition set to Pilu" and not as "a sarod gat based on Rabindra Sangeet".

The Endeavour and its Acceptance: It took quite some time for this novel approach to be accepted by the musicians, critics and listeners in its correct perspective. At the initial stage, presentation of such compositions were limited to more intimate gatherings rather than important and full fledged classical concerts. The response of the musical community, though not of outright rejection was somewhat confused. On one hand they were moved by the aesthetic appeal of the compositions, but on the other, were not quite sure of the categorization of such compositions. These compositions were definitely not like light classical compositions (commonly termed as "*dhun*").

Their appeal was definitely more dignified, and were set to purer forms of Ragas for the *Dhuns* are mostly set to lighter and blended Ragas with an ambience akin to that of folk music. They could also not be classified as authentic classical compositions or *bandishes* propagated over musical generations, as their origin was quite different. Sometimes they were sweepingly described as "Rabindra-sangeet played on sarod". This was a totally inappropriate description as well, as the compositions, more often than not, were quite different in their overall melodic construction, rythmic orientation and tempo than the original Rabindra-sangeet it had been derived from. In most cases the similarity was at a much more abstract level of melodic ideas and movements.

Therefore it was left to the proponents of this approach to educate and appraise the audience over the true characteristic of

these compositions. This led to the formulation of certain experimental presentations featuring exponents of Rabindra-sangeet and classical musicians on a common stage, where some selected songs were presented along with their transformed versions of instrumental composition (or "*gat*" in the parlance of Hindusthani music), with adequate explanations in between. One of the earliest presentations of this kind was featured by Doordarshan Kendra, Calcutta with Budhhadev Dasgupta, V.Balsara (the famous pianist and film music personality) and Sri Ramanuj Dasgupta, (one of the contemporary upcoming Rabindra Sangeet singers). The reception to this program was very positive. Noted personalities from the sphere of Rabindra-sangeet as well as classical music acclaimed the effort. Further, as an interesting spin off, a large section of lay music-lovers and Tagore enthusiasts found an interesting cue towards the so-called "abstract" appeal of classical music.

A number of similar experimental programs were staged over the following years, with other eminent personalities from spheres of classical music and Rabindra-sangeet, volunteering to take part in such ventures. There have been quite a few presentations of these nature featuring Suchitra Mitra and Budhhadev Dasgupta, Subinoy Roy, Ravi Kichlu and Jaya Biswas and many others. Programs on this theme were accepted and presented by the AIR and Doordarshan on a number of occasions as well. Following suit, the Sangeet Natak Academy also funded a complete project on this theme.

From this point onwards, it can be said, that the endeavour received its formal acceptance from the connoisseurs and listeners of classical music as also from the mass media. The idea was thereafter emulated by some of the most well known classical instrumentalists like Ustad Amjad Ali Khan. The trend continues to this day with dedicated stage programs focusing on classical compositions derived from Rabindra-sangeet. The interesting thing to note here is that just as the stage is shared by Rabindra-sangeet singers and classical instrumentalists, the galleries as well are shared by listeners of Rabindra-sangeet and classical music.

The Aspects of Transformation: Having delineated the course of evolution of this interesting work, it would be worthwhile to

take a closer look at the aspects of transformation that it involves. Since this has to be examined on the basis of concrete examples, the author has chosen a few, from the works of Sri Budhhadev Dasgupta, whose contribution in this regard has not only been a pioneering one, but perhaps also the most profound and exhaustive. The compositions derived by him had been based on a number of different perspectives of musical thinking.

It should be borne in mind that when we talk of transformation, we are obviously not talking about simply playing Rabindra-sangeet on sarod. Certain ideas are taken from the original Rabindra-sangeet and used to formulate a composition suitable for the context of a classical instrument. The original song therefore, undergoes a change or a sort of reconstruction in that certain salient ideas taken from the song are represented using the elements of sarod vocabulary. The resulting composition can consequently differ to a considerable extent from the orginal song that inspired its creation.

The difference mostly is on counts of rhythmic construction or tempo but sometimes also in details of melodic construction. The similarity on the other hand is rather abstract and more often than not at the level of an overall melodic outline. There are a few examples of course, where the nature of the original song itself is so akin to that of a classical presentation that it finds its way almost unaltered into a classical composition.

Revisiting Lost Domains in Ragas or Ragas Themselves: As mentioned before, in many of his creations Rabindranath had focussed on ragas from rather striking and unexpected perspectives. Some of the movements he had used, though unusual, could not be challenged on counts of beauty and conformity to the raga. Some of these movements were taken from very old and traditional conventions in classical music.

One such example is the use of R, G, M, P, D.., M G in the opening lines of *Shanti karo borishono*, based on Rag Tilak Kamod. From this took birth a beautiful, medium tempo (Madhya Laya) sarod composition (gat).

An almost forgotten but exceedingly lyrical and romantic usage of Komal Gandhar in the latter part of the opening stanza

(sthayee) of the song *Oi Janalar dhare* (Click here for an excerpt of the song or the *bandish* (Singer: Aniruddha Sinha; Ensemble: Sitar-Sugata Nag, Rahul Chatterjee, Sarod-Anirban Dasgupta, Pratyush Banerjee) is another outstanding example of such an application. In *Emono dine tare bola jai* we find a beautiful yet unconventional portrayal of Desh Malhar.

Both of these songs have inspired excellent sarod gats set to teental. In some of the songs there has been an excellent delineation of uncommon Ragas. *Aji jato tara tabo akashe* (Excerpts: of the song or sarod-solo *bandish*. Artists: Sriradha Banerjee, sarod solo: Buddhadev Dasgupta) beautifully pictures Manjh Khambaj, a Raga which existed in the days of yore, but was somewhat rarely heard in the arena of pure classical music.

This song was almost completely imbibed into an excellent slow teental (Vilambit) composition by Buddhadev, and has been rendered by him in many of his important concerts. (Excerpt: Anirban Dasgupta, Buddhadev Dasgupta and Zakir Hussain playing Manjh Khamaj at Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, 1985.) Incidentally, the same raga which Tagore so adeptly applied in his song, was later revived and popularised in the world of classical music by Acharya Alauddin Khan and his son, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, the legendary sarodiya.

Beauty of Approach, Movement and Melody: As mentioned before, many of the songs, have such a poignant and emotionally moving representation of commonly known ragas, that it would become rather difficult for a sensitive classical musician to overlook their intrinsic musicality. This poignancy or musicality in more objective terms can be interpreted as interesting application of note sequences. Many of the derived sarod compositions have been inspired by this factor.

For example, in the song *Shedin dujone* one finds such an entrancing portrayal of the raga Pilu; here the notes of this rather common raga have been played with creative mastery. This was, in fact, Budhadev's first inspiration to derive a sarod composition from Rabindra sangeet. In "*Chokhe-r aaloey*" one finds a simple yet serenely beautiful depiction of Yaman Kalyan. This was converted into a medium tempo composition set to Teen tal.

A scintillating fast Tintal composition of Khambaj was created from *Amar kantha hote gaan ke nilo*. The rhythm of the original song (Dadra) had to be entirely changed in order to adapt it to the ambience of an instrumental presentation. This was necessary as the idea was to present not just the song but a full-fledged classical composition derived out of it. The basis of this transformation was the beauty of the melodic outline of the song. In contrast, *Jodi e amaro* is a striking example where not only is the melodic construction but also the rhythmic framework has been followed in to-to in the derived instrumental composition based on raga Kafi. Here as well, Tagore entrances us with the rare, beautiful yet unmistakable approach to Kafi starting from the note *Dhaibat*.

Out of Tagore's many songs based on Bhairabi, *Tabo daya* is one of the most outstanding considering the exquisite application of notes the heightens the expression of beauty and devotion. This prompted the creation of a medium tempo gat, largely maintaining the note sequences but changing the rhythmic framework to the somewhat-more-brisk Teen tal.

There are more examples of this nature, such as *Shey kon boner horin* (Hemant) vocal [by Agnibha Banerjee] or instrumental *bandish* [by the "Ensemble"}, or *Shopney amar mone holo* (Hameer). vocal [by Aniruddha Sinha] or instrumental *bandish* [composed by the "Ensemble"].

(Re)Discovering Old Classical Compositions: Most of the songs composed by Rabindranath are characterised by their outstanding individuality, both from the point of views of lyric and melody. But on a certain instances we also find him faithfully adapting the melodic content of old classical compositions. In certain cases where he found the melodic as well as rhythmic orientation of existing or old classical compositions in keeping with the clime of the song being composed he never hesitated to follow them with complete faith.

It was perhaps his tribute to a rich tradition of classical music. Hence in some of the songs like *Shukho hin nishi din*, (vocal [by Haimanti Shukla], sarod *bandish* [by Buddhadev Dasgupta] or *Shunyo hate phiri he* we find priceless classical *bandishes,* faithfully captured and set to outstanding poetry. Even playing these songs

verbatim on an instrument would make them sound like authentic classical instrumental compositions. An interesting commentary on this is provided in the audio-cassette series named "Rupantori", featuring stalwarts like Subinoy Roy and Prasun Banerjee.

Highlighting Tagore's Outstanding Ideations on Blending Ragas: Sometimes, his flights of imagination had led Tagore to such emotional moods, that the tonal colors available from the basic ragas were not adequate to express them. Under such circumstances he used his artistic liberty to blend ragas. This resulted in masterful combination of some of the known ragas producing unforeseen melodic shades of the highest artistic order. One sees such a marriage between the ragas Todi and Bhairvi in the song *Rajani-r shesh tara*.

Another unparalleled confluence of Bahar and Basant is noted in the song *Ami tomari shonge* (vocal [by Sriradha Banerjee] or *bandish* [by Buddhadev Dasgupta]). There may be many more examples. However, in the context of this discussion, it can be mentioned that both of these songs have provided potent ideas not only towards framing beautiful *bandishes* but also creating new kinds of blended ragas.

What it Means for a Classical Instrumentalist: Evolution of new ideas in the realm of classical instrumental music inspired by Rabindra-sangeet is of more than incidental significance to some classical instrumentalists. An instrumentalist who has experienced, understood the classical appeal in Rabindra Sangeet and has succeeded in deriving useful ideas from it will obviously find his musical horizon widening much more than ever before.

He will develop the insight to discover interesting and unknown corners of known ragas, which will not only apply to the derived compositions but also to the more conventional aspects of his playing like Alap and Vistar. At a more abstract level it might also have significant effects and possibly improvements on his perspective of thinking on ragas.

The derived compositions, which as metioned before, have a very distinctive aesthetic ambience would considerably expand his repertoire. He will find himself in possession the magic key to an inexhaustible repository of ideas.

Conclusion: It is a known fact that classical musicians over all ages and centuries have derived musical ideas from classical as well as non-classical sources. In a sense, therefore, this example of Rabindra-sangeet inspiring creation of classical compositions may be interpreted as a repetition of history. However, a closer look suggests a difference. This lies in the artistic maturity of the source material in this case, so that a strong temptation to plagiarize must be resisted and the essence gleaned, and this can be an extremely challenging task.

Also, this endeavour has encouraged an interesting cross-influence. Some of the classical musicians have come down from their ivory towers and given Rabindra-sangeet its much overdue recognition. The exponents of Rabindra-sangeet by and large have welcomed this dialogue between these two islands of India's musical culture which were so far largely isolated from each other. For classical instrumentalists it opened up an extremely potent resource to excavate for newer ideas which are applicable to their own realm. Finally, the subtle yet long-term consequence could be to motivate future generations of musicians to enrich the realm of Classical Music from similar sources beyond the boundary their own domain.

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